

琴帝

唐家三少◎著



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Chapter 1 – Born with Eight Fingers (I)

To look upon all of the townships of the continent, one must start from the weakest of the kingdoms, where the kingdom of Arcadia was undoubtedly the smallest. Located in the southeast, it was bordered on both sides by a boundless ocean. In addition, both coastal regions were claimed and ruled by two powerful empires encompassing the land. On account of being the continent’s core, requests for assistance must go through the Blue Diasempire before help can be sent. If that was the case, the kingdom of Arcadia may already be destroyed prematurely without notice. The story began in the Arcadian capital, Luna city.

From the southern part of the continent, the fiery, blazing sun rose in the sky, bringing with it a scorching stream of scaldingly hot air. Everyone bathed in the sunshine, as if their bodies were burning coals. All of them perspired heavily in the heat. Although it was morning, the streets of Luna city had yet to awaken. The whole city appearing to be quite lazy. It was not surprising that people chose to say that it was the reason why the two formidable empires, Blue Dias and Wavast, chose to not divide Arcadia in half. Not only was this because the Blue Dias empire chose to intervene, it was also because the city served as the hottest place on the continent.

Naturally, the only exception at this sleepy moment in Luna city had just arrived to stand in front of the city’s Magic Guild: an old, spry man.

He wore a white, creaseless magic robe that suited him well. A wrinkled face indicated old age, and silver-white long hair was neatly combed to the back of the head. The mage possessed a tall build. In comparison to ordinary Arcadians, he stood taller by at least half a head. Within the folds of his right sleeve, he held a slender staff used to support his body. It was improbable to believe, however, that he depended on the staff to support his body because the mage’s eyes were vibrant and as deep as an abyss, a peerlessly clear pair of black eyes. The old mage narrowed his eyes, but the faint light still revealed that the door had carelessly been left open.

“Praise Blue Dias. Hello revered mage. Sir, may I ask if I can provide you with any assistance?” Pi’er Luo recently exited the Magic Guild and saw the old mage.

The old mage did not wear any expensive attire or magic goods. Even his magic robe, which covered his upper and lower body, did not possess any elemental volatility, making it difficult to distinguish his rank. However, Pi'er Luo was a yellow ranked mage at the Magic Guild of Luna city for over 20 years, making him trust his intuition. Only those who chose to show off their talents would wear magic robes with symbols that reflected their magical might, and before his eyes was an old mage that at least surpassed the age of 70. How could he only be an elementary mage? Furthermore, his wrinkled forehead did not even have a single drop of perspiration.

"Praise Blue Dias," the old mage's voice sounded extraordinarily gentle and melodic. Although it was somewhat muffled, it resembled a spring breeze, bathing people in refreshing coolness and lessening the severity of the scorching air. "I have arrived from Blue Dias to ask to see the guild's interim president."

Pi'er Luo's body abruptly stiffened, eyes brimming with amazement and ecstasy. To arrive from Blue Dias? He originates from Blue Dias; on the continent, even the most ordinary civilians, upon hearing this sentence, would understand the meaning of it. Luna city's guild president passed away two years ago. Ever since that event two years ago, the Arcadian Magic Guild's presidential office had remained empty. To arrive from Blue Dias, could it be...?

What was the continent's most majestic profession? A mage. Perhaps there were some people that did not believe in God's existence, but there were none that did not worship a mage. Blue Dias claimed a portion of the continent which contained a terrain of fertile soil that was approximately half the size of the kingdom of Arcadia. No other country dared to fight this claim because it was the holy land of mages. Every country firmly believed that Blue Dias practically ruled the entire continent, excluding the Northern Wasteland.

Blue Dias was the holy land of mages. In addition, mages were the most fearsome people in the territory besides the Blue Dias Guardian Flange Legion. Only mages could enter Blue Dias. Entering was not a particularly difficult matter; however, desiring to leave Blue Dias was near impossible for mages despite their hopes. No one below indigo rank in strength was permitted to leave the place.

The levels of mages from the lowest to the highest of rank, whether it was an

elementary mage, intermediate mage, advanced mage, great mage, magic scholar, magister or great magister, were all ranked by the colors of the rainbow. An elementary mage was equivalent to the first color of the rainbow, red. In a similar fashion, indigo rank was representative of a magister. The first six colors of the rainbow were subdivided into three levels. For example, Pi'er Luo was a yellow ranked mage at the intermediate level. The final color violet, equivalent to a great magister, was subdivided into nine levels, with an immense gap in strength between each level. The reason why Blue Dias was capable of being the holy land of mages was due to the seven story magic pagoda existing in the middle of Blue Dias. In every story of the pagoda, there was a ninth level violet ranked mage – the pinnacle of magic that everyone on the continent strived for.

Therefore, throughout the continent, identifying a person's strength was very easy as magic, when released, possessed an indicative color that distinguished its own strength.

"Please, enter," Pi'er Luo said humbly and stepped aside with reverence.

The old mage's face held a glimpse of a smile and gave a slight nod to Pi'er Luo as he followed him into the Magic Guild.

The guild hall contained a plethora of magical elements; on the ground, a mithril Six-Star Tessellation was inlaid, radiating a faint silver light. The guild hall was very spacious. The great relationship between Arcadia and the smaller kingdoms, in addition to the scarcity of mages, meant that there was no choice but to employ them all constantly, causing the hall to be completely deserted. Thus, despite the Magic Guild's high status in the kingdom, the guild itself was cold and cheerless.

Pi'er Luo and the old mage did not wait for very long. After a short while, another old mage appeared in the guild hall to invite them in. This mage was attired in a cyan magic robe, its exterior resembling the old mage quite well.

"Praise Blue Dias. Hello, mage from a distant location. I am the Arcadian Magic Guild interim president, Fire Mage Di Ya La," he said, slowly bowing to the old white robed mage. At the same time, his right hand emitted a cyan flame to illustrate his exact position as a primary level cyan ranked mage. This was a majestic etiquette among mages as a way to be made aware of Di Ya La's status

in Arcadia. However, even the king did not need to know his rank. The reason why he was so respectful to the old white robed mage was because he originated from Blue Dias.

“Praise Blue Dias. I am called Qin Shang. I have arrived from Blue Dias because of a letter.” Qin Shang switched his wooden staff to his left hand, extending his right hand towards Di Ya La as he materialized, in a flash of brilliant light, a sheepskin scroll in the hollow of his palm.

Whether it was Pi’er Luo or Di Ya La, both of them were stupefied at what they had just witnessed because they could clearly see, despite the dimness, that the faint light materializing in Qin Shang’s hand was violet.

Di Ya La’s hands trembled as he took the sheepskin scroll, slowly unfurling it to discover that the sheepskin scroll was blank. Di Ya La, however, did not sense anything strange. His gaze subconsciously drifted towards Qin Shang.

Chapter 1 – Born with Eight Fingers (II)

Qin Shang waved his right hand, and once again, a faint violet light covered the sheepskin scroll. Immediately, blocks of characters emerged from under the faint violet radiance. Di Ya La was elated, reading aloud, “| By decree, primary level violet ranked Divine Music mage Qin Shang is to be appointed as president of the Arcadian Magic Guild. | Ah, you are a Divine Music mage?” Di Ya La’s and Pi’er Luo’s shock shifted to horror at this revelation.

One’s spirit was connected to their chosen magic specialization; as a Divine Music mage, magic was linked with the ability to play musical instruments to release magic. Throughout the continent, Divine Music mages could be said to be the most expensive specialization and the most dubious of worth. Divine Music mages had a very difficult time surpassing the yellow rank. At most, they would boost minor morale on the battlefield. Until recently, only the daughter of a noble or a princess of a country would be interested in studying in this majestic yet dubious magic. Before their eyes, however, was a violet ranked Divine Music mage. Di Ya La couldn’t believe his eyes. The scroll had six beautiful silver stars revolving around an ancient dark blue symbol at the bottom right corner. This symbol represented the seven story Blue Dias magic pagoda. Clearly, the person

called Qin Shang was a mage who passed through the magic pagoda to gain the ability to arrive here. In addition, he actually released violet-tinted magic, once again proving his status to be true.

Qin Shang's aged face displayed an expression of contemplation as he faced northwest in the direction of the magic pagoda. Ah, the experience was something he would not forget for a very long time. That was the true magic!

Di Ya La soon returned to normal. The Blue Dias decree was impossible to falsify, so he hastily rolled up the sheepskin scroll delivered by Qin Shang. "Di Ya La and Pi'er Luo greet the new president."

Qin Shang recovered the scroll, saying, "At the moment, how many Arcadian mages are there?"

Hearing Qin Shang's inquiry, Di Ya La couldn't refrain himself from expressing a trace of bitterness. "Arcadia, myself included, possesses one cyan ranked mage, three green ranked mages, 24 yellow ranked mages, 67 orange ranked mages, and 213 red ranked mages. The majority of them are members of the military, leaving the guild with only a dozen people."

Qin Shang's face displayed a faint trace of astonishment. "Is it so little? Although the path of a mage is a long journey, Arcadia has tens of millions of people. Don't tell me that the mages here only amount to 300? Ah, I recall that number of mages in other countries do not seem to be as sparse as it is here!"

Di Ya La sighed and replied, "In the past it was not so little, and the kingdom of Arcadia has always been renowned for our fire mages. At the moment, however, the kingdom's strength has weakened, and the two empires now share the claim of possessing the strongest mages. It is natural to be willing to leave everything behind to travel to either of the two empires. At this moment, you have arrived, a violet ranked Great Magister! We, Arcadia, have already existed for several hundred years without the emergence of a powerful violet ranked mage. I am convinced that the Arcadian Magic Guild, under your guidance, will rise to power." Although, he was no longer young, he couldn't help but feel excited, gazing at Qin Shang with a somewhat fanatical expression.

At the same time, an elegant, melodic voice echoed from the outside, "Master Di Ya La is not in?"

Di Ya La's face held a trace of a smile even as he faced Qin Shang and made an apologetic sound. He left to welcome his guest. A short while later, a young woman following Di Ya La entered the hall.

The woman was exceptionally beautiful, long black hair framing a fair face. Even with the slight plumpness of her face, her noble temperament remained unaffected. She was adorned in a long jade green skirt. No matter who was walking by, they would have to straighten and take notice of her slender waist and seemingly impossible curves. Currently, her arms were full of swaddling clothes, soft breathing emitting from the sleeping infant within.

Looking at the woman, Qin Shang's eyes brightened. His narrowed eyes slowly opened, radiantly twinkling.

The woman immediately sensed those luminous twinkling eyes on her. Her elegant eyebrows creased together before her eyes flashed with a cyan light. She looked towards Qin Shang. Their gazes crossed for a split second, and the light in the woman's eyes immediately dimmed, becoming absent-minded. When she returned back to normal, her face changed drastically as she subconsciously hugged the infant closer to her bosom.

Di Ya La was confused, facing toward the woman and saying, "Mei Ying, where is Ye Zhong? Why didn't he accompany you. Didn't you just give birth barely a month ago?"

Mei Ying subconsciously traversed half a step, smiling at him, "Ah, he is currently training his dou qi. Thus, I came here alone. Master, our child is already a month old. Please, I must beseech you to grant him your blessing." Mages gave protection blessings to newborn babies when they turned a month old. The higher ranked the mage, the healthier the blessed infant will grow. This blessing was unrestricted by magic specialization.

Di Ya La laughed, smiling as he promised, "No problem, I had already said at an earlier time that I would bless your child after he was born. Oh, by the way, let me introduce you to the newly appointed guild president arriving from Blue Dias, Qin Shang." Although his friend had arrived, he did not forget about the newly appointed president standing to the side.

Mei Ying had not forgotten about her eyes becoming hazy and dim earlier, but

she merely greeted him, "Praise Blue Dias. Hello, Master."

Qin Shang began to speak, opening his mouth, only to hear a resonant infant cry emerging from the swaddling of clothes. A pair of lotus white arms appeared from the swaddling clothes, exploratively waving and seemingly breaking free from the mother's arms.

Qin Shang paused abruptly, mouth hanging open, at the sight of Mei Ying's baby's two hands. Those two delicately small and white hands only had four fingers; the little finger was missing on both hands. This was the first time he displayed a substantial change in expressions since he had arrived at the Magic Guild. Moreover, this shock-influenced change, to an extent, was witnessed by many people.

In one step, Qin Shang was already standing in front of Mei Ying, his aged face excited and somewhat flushed. He raised his trembling hands to touch the small, twinkling, crystal, milky white hands that were as tender as spring onions. His movement was swift, resembling a warrior more than a mage.

"What are you doing?" Mei Ying shouted in a high-pitched voice, taking two steps backwards. Even though Qin Shang's speed was not slow, he felt like he only touched a phantom.

Not continuing his motions, Qin Shang's eyes followed the two delicately small hands, lifelessly staring at them. With his hands still raised up, he said, "Eight fingers, to unexpectedly be born naturally with eight fingers is a sign of genius. Ah, this is absolutely a genius!"

Di Ya La was startled by the sudden scene, quickly advancing forward a few steps and stopping in between Mei Ying and Qin Shang. Anxiously, he said, "Don't get me wrong, don't misunderstand me, Master Qin Shang. You, you, this is....."

Qin Shang, after all, was a Great Magister. His face slowly returned to tranquility, head lowered, as he looked down at the ground with the inlaid magical mithril Six-Star Tessellation. He pondered for a long time before his eyes lit up with elation, clapping his hands together happily like a child. "Praise Blue Dias. I have a tendency to act first, that's all."

Raising his head, he looked at Mei Ying and her wary yet inquisitive eyes. Qin

Shang slightly smiled, and even though his whole face was wrinkled, his exquisite clothing and demeanor still exuded grace. “Miss Mei Ying, you have arrived today to obtain a magical blessing for your child, correct?”

Mei Ying nodded her head.

Qin Shang’s gaze shifted over to Di Ya La, “If this is the case, let me bestow the blessing upon this child.”

Chapter 1 – Born with Eight Fingers (III)

Di Ya La looked distracted. Getting a baby’s one month blessing from an Elementary mage was already very difficult, not to mention from a violet ranked Great Magister. Ah, only powerful princes and princesses received such treatment!

“This.....” Di Ya La looked towards Mei Ying. Because he was sixty-seven years old this year, he could tell that Qin Shang’s expression changed when he saw Mei Ying’s child, and he couldn’t help but be hesitant. Since Mei Ying was married, how could he explain if their child was hurt?

Mei Ying’s eyes showed a faint coldness, making the pride deep in her bones more obvious. “Honored president, I would like to know why.”

The calmness in Qin Shang’s eyes changed when he saw the pair of little hands, and his eyes showed profound emotion. His voice even sounded a bit more magnetic. “It’s because of his hands. I see the world’s most perfect hands. Miss Mei Ying, I meant no harm.”

Mei Ying’s coldness gradually disappeared. Indeed, in front of her was Qin Shang, a magister of some kind. Although his eyes were filled with an eager light and radiance, they did not have the slightest bit of malice. Rather, they were full of intimacy. Her face couldn’t help but twist once Qin Shang lifted her son’s hands. “Master Qin Shang, why do you say that my son’s hands are the most perfect in the world? Are you mocking me?”

Man had two hands, each with five fingers. For a warrior, even a single finger was extremely important. Although Mei Ying was concerned that her child lost his left and right little finger, it also greatly affected his ability to hold a weapon

because he was unable to grip even a sword. Which parents did not want their children to be perfect? Mei Ying was no exception. The rest of her child was perfect, but the fact that he was born with eight fingers made her heartbroken. The eight fingers had dictated that their child could not become a fencing master, but, ah, that was the family's hope!

"Oh, no, no. Praise Blue Dias. I swear in the name of Blue Dias, I did not mean to mock you." Qin Shang's eyes brimmed with emotion as he looked after the struggling and crying baby, with an incredible amount of loving kindness displayed on the surprisingly soft lines on his face. "Perhaps for others, these are incomplete hands, but, for people like me, they are absolutely perfect. Wait a moment. You will understand."

Di Ya La and Pi'er Luo watched as Qin Shang slowly sat down crossed-legged in front of Mei Ying. A light flashed from his right hand, and Mei Ying vaguely caught a glimpse of a ring on Qin Shang's right little finger. It was a space ring, the magister's most important instrument.

A seven-stringed, reddish brown zither appeared on his knees, with a faint silvery glow. With both hands on the strings, Qin Shang's face changed dramatically.

His old face became dull and meek, and his body was filled with the breath of life. It was as if he had been sitting there maintaining his posture since the ancient times. For a split second, he touched the white, silver-haired strings of the zither with both hands. Everyone and everything merged together in the Magic Guild hall. Subconsciously, everyone's eyes focused on his body.

His left hand lifted above the zither's string. He lightly hooked the string with his right thumb and index finger and lightly touched the fifth string with his middle and ring finger. His thumb relaxed, and, while raising his index finger to the sky, he lightly plucked the seventh string. He drew out a rich, deep buzz that spiraled and lingered through the air, and in an instant, the air seemed to freeze. The baby's crying quietly stopped.

The infant, with his bright, black eyes, looked towards the sound and softly babbled.

Whether an Advanced Mage like Pi'er Luo, a Mage Scholar like Di Ya La, or a

fighter like Mei Ying, hearing such a clear and pure sound cleansed all of the impurities in their bodies and their blood with an unprecedented permeability. An indescribable feeling of comfort filled them.

“You can perform Withered Wood and Dragon’s Roar...” All of the hidden hostility in Mei Ying’s eyes vanished. She looked at Qin Shang, astonished and pleased.

Qin Shang simply smiled in response. Both hands began to move. His left hand lightly pressed down, and his right hand swept to the side. A touching melody floated through the air. The zither’s sound was exquisite and delicate. His fingers moved smoothly and lightly at a brisk rhythm, yet with control. He swung back and forth and side to side emotionally, chanting in his heart. In a faint violet light, his hands moved rhythmically with the silver strings. The hall became encompassed in a halo of violet light, but the light did not spread.

Elementary Mage power was undoubtedly more powerful compared to the average person, but Pi’er Luo and Di Ya La were already moving, lost in the music. Their eyes were filled with joy and confusion, forgetting about time and space.

Mei Ying was the only one who remained clear-headed. She did not know that her spirit power was far better than an Elementary Mage, but she still remained sober. She could clearly see that the dim violet light gathered towards the direction of the baby in her arms.

Mei Ying looked down at her baby to find that he was no longer crying. She was astonished to see that her son was smiling. Exactly when did this happen? Both hands, each with only four fingers, were gently waving in the air to the sound of the zither. His waving hands matched the music, and the faint violet light delicately worked its way into his body, which began to go through bizarre changes.

Was this actually happening? Mei Ying became aware of her feelings and only recovered after the zither’s sound quietly ended, after what seemed like one’s lifetime.

“Meandering brocade, dripping in the goblet. The chord loosens a treasured harmonic pillar. The roasted silver bamboo reed. The spring thunder of the

zither, meld into the song<<Green Water>>. They were the most suitable sounds to baptize this child in.” Qin Shang’s voice pulled Mei Ying back from her dream-like state. Mei Ying lifted her head to see Qin Shang’s eyes shining with silver light and that the zither had already disappeared. She looked at the baby in her arms to find that he was asleep. Even his breathing was pleasant and peaceful. The baby’s skin seemed to become more shiny, and his face wore a little smile.

“Gifted! He is absolutely gifted! My judgment wasn’t wrong. Even though he had just turned a month old, he could really sense my beautiful zither. I truly envy your ancestors! Why can’t I be in his place? Now you should understand why I admire his perfect, little hands. For a zither player, the left and right hand’s little finger is forbidden from use, so this has no effect on learning the zither. The little finger is unnecessary and will definitely be an interference. As a Divine Music Mage, I know too much about this. There was a legend that a man with six fingers on both hands performed six-fingered zither magic, but that is completely made up. Playing with eight fingers is enough. Ah, being born with eight fingers is perfect!” Qin Shang sighed.

“Master, you……” Mei Ying attempted to ask something, but her proud words disappeared. The body did not release violet light, but before it was <<Green Water>>, and the sound was Withered Wood and Dragon’s Roar.

Qin Shang spoke: “I am from Blue Dias. If not for the blue sky and sea, why would I come here? I wanted to find a disciple to pass on my legacy, but I didn’t expect such a gift from your family and ancestors. Let’s go, take me to your father-in-law. Ye Li, oh, Ye Li, you have disappeared for ten years. I don’t know if your body is still strong.”

Chapter 1 – Born with Eight Fingers (IV)

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Qin Shang smiled humbly, making a silencing gesture. “Apparently, after over twenty years of absence, I must request a proper discussion with Old Ye Li.”

Mei Ying glanced towards Pi’er Luo and Di Ya La, quietly inquiring, “ Master, what should they do?”

Qin Shang gently coughed, his eyes flashing violet. The two men woke up from

their perplexed state, Di Ya La exclaiming loudly, “Extremely beautiful, this is extremely beautiful indeed. Praise Blue Dias. This is the first time I have been made aware of such a powerful Divine Music mage. I wish to be able to ask you for guidance several times later on in the future.”

Qin Shang shook his head and responded, “You sense the spirit of a powerful mage but are unable to appreciate it. The difference between the spirit and element is still too large.” He said these words to Di Ya La and Pi’er Luo before turning towards Mei Ying and sending her a meaningful glance.

Mei Ying understood, “Many thanks, Master Qin Shang, for blessing my child with your magic. I insist that Great Master visit and tour the Desolate Jade Sea where my husband and I will do the honors of hosting you. How about that?”

Qin Shang nodded, saying, “You’re welcome. I’ll be there.”

Somewhat startled, Di Ya La said, “Praise Blue Dias. Ah, Mei Ying, even I seemed to have not received such treatment!”

Mei Ying smiled and quipped, “There may be an opportunity later on in the future. Master Qin Shang, please.”

.....

The Desolate Jade Sea was an isolated jade green sea empty of anything except bamboo! Therefore, the Desolate Jade Sea referred to a prosperous, densely thick, lush bamboo forest.

The Desolate Jade Sea was located 30 kilometers west of Luna city. Bamboo stalks of various lengths grew and created a unique scenery with faintly flickering lights. Visibly, the azure bamboo stalks stood loftily, flexibly swaying like green rays of light.

To the Arcadians, the Desolate Jade Sea was an exotic location that produced an abundance of fresh bamboo shoots. However, no one could venture deep into the Desolate Jade Sea nor could anyone completely understand the Desolate Jade Sea and its vastness. It bordered the kingdom of Arcadia and the western fringes of the Blue Dias empire. Every individual that tried to penetrate the Desolate Jade Sea and solve the unfathomable mystery surrounding it inevitably appeared again by themselves and empty-handed. No one knew why.

This bamboo forest, other than cultivating bamboo shoots, did not produce any other rich specialities. Thus, no one paid attention to it nor disturbed it.

The difference in temperature between the Desolate Jade Sea and Luna city was immense. Possibly due to the jade bamboo stalks growing there, the Desolate Jade Sea naturally dissipated the scorching heat of the atmosphere.

Mei Ying embraced her beloved son as she and Qin Shang visited the Desolate Jade Sea. “Senior, you are so physically fit to be able to walk for so long without even a sign of fatigue. For you to be a mage of this caliber, this is the first time I have seen such a mage!” she exclaimed.

30 kilometers for a warrior was of no consequence, but for a mage, the distance was quite lengthy. Careful examination revealed that a faint circle of air swirled around the infant in the swaddling clothes; this was the result of Mei Ying utilizing her Dou Qi to protect her beloved son from the scorching weather.

Qin Shang bitterly laughed, “Did you not hear? Hundreds of mages do not use Divine Music. As a Divine Music mage, I do not have the proper magic specialization for an acceleration technique, and I did not want any attendants. When traveling all over the continent, it is best to rely on one’s own two legs. Over time, it allows you to travel farther than ordinary people and to possess more physical power than other mages.”

As he was talking, Qin Shang discovered that the bamboo forest in front of them turned somewhat illusionary. Smiling knowingly, he conveniently broke the root of a bamboo stalk with one hand. He walked forward. His hand beat the bamboo stalk like he was beating a drum, and his motions rapidly slowed down to create an unusual sound vibration. Furthermore, he did not allow Mei Ying to guide the way, immediately walking into the depths of the bamboo forest. Ordinary civilians would have never been able to surpass the Desolate Jade Sea, but as he was the visitor in question, what could possibly detain him?

The slow pace was in actually rapidly fast, but Mei Ying was unsurprised due to earlier presumptions. She followed closely at Qin Shang’s heels, entering the depths of the bamboo forest.

Close to the center of the Desolate Jade Sea, a neat row of bamboo houses were arranged to surround a grove of bamboo stalks that was the size of ten

rooms, the shadows of the bamboo dancing elegantly. Unperturbed, Mei Ying and Qin Shang arrived in front of a bamboo house, and a hoarse voice emerged from the bamboo house, “Ying’er, don’t tell me you have brought along a stranger? Have you forgotten what I have told you?”

Mei Ying opened her mouth to speak, but Qin Shang already began scolding, “I see you are well, Ye Li. Yet, you’re unwilling to see even your old friends?”

The door of the bamboo house opened, and as quick as lightning, the silhouette of a figure arrived instantly to welcome Mei Ying and Qin Shang. Although the movement was swift, it was very natural and fluid without any feeling of abruptness.

Ye Li was somewhat taller than Qin Shang and had long ash grey hair loosely draping over his shoulders and behind his back. His face was significantly less wrinkled than Qin Shang’s. He looked to be in his fifties, with a perfectly straight back and intimidating radiant eyes. He was undoubtedly a mature man who had experienced the vicissitudes of life. Seeing Qin Shang, his generously large pair of hands rose to seize his shoulders, and Qin Shang did not evade him.

“Old partner, why did you come to visit? It has been over 20 years since we have last seen each other,” Ye Li exclaimed excitedly.

Qin Shang’s calm demeanor vanished in front of Ye Li, making a somewhat comical expression as he said, “Look at you! You are so young, while I am old, and you still practice Dou Qi, good! Ah, magic really does accelerate the aging process. I still remember when I only looked a year older than you.”

Ye Li snapped, “Young? Do you not see my hair rapidly turning white? Please, let’s continue our conversation inside.” He stepped to the side, pulling Qin Shang into the room. In the process, he caught a glimpse of Mei Ying and his grandson.

The interior of the bamboo house was simple, containing nothing more than a bamboo couch, a bamboo table, and a bamboo chair.

Chapter 2 – The Zither and Bamboo Combination (I)

Ye Li picked up the kettle resting on the table, poured a cup of fresh water, and handed it over to Qin Shang, “This is fresh spring water from beneath the Desolate Jade Sea, you should taste it.”

Qin Shang took the proffered drink. Taking a sip, he sighed in admiration, “Refreshingly cool and sweet, delicious. You are living the life.”

Ye Li lamented, “We have not seen each other in 20 years, you old bastard. Coming to me now, whose fault is it to blame for what happened? You do know that the affairs of the Bamboo Sect no longer concern me. It no longer has anything to do with me.”

Qin Shang smiled, saying, “I did not even say anything, yet you are already completely rejecting me. You are under the impression that I am seeking your return, but this time I am not.”

Ye Li’s eyes expressed his astonishment, “You no longer attend?”

Qin Shang nodded, “I have just returned from Blue Dias.”

Hearing the two words, ‘Blue Dias,’ Ye Li’s expression changed instantly, subtly frozen. “You are still in attendance. Thus, you have already reached the violet rank, I presume?”

Qin Shang narrowed his eyes, flickering them up and down as he sized Ye Li up, “Aren’t you the same? Let me see why.”

Ye Li opened his eyes and glared at him grumpily with an air of arrogance and obstinance, a faint violet aura emerging and surrounding his body. The heavy pressure did not affect Qin Shang even as the brilliant rays of light intensified. “Well, you are at the primary level as well. It seems that neither of us have fallen behind.”

Ye Li said, “I am not your opponent. At this time, throughout the whole continent, there is not a single type of magic or Dou Qi that can best your zither magic. Were you under the belief that I was unaware of this?”

Qin Shang faintly smiled and said, “With my zither, it only takes me a third of

the effort to utilize my full power. In these circumstances, it is impossible for you to defeat me! I can also hold you helpless in my grasp. Do you think I will allow you to escape? Will you allow me to give chase after you?"

Ye Li fiercely said, "Even at this distance, you don't believe that I can kill you?."

Qin Shang leisurely drank his fresh spring water, "I do not believe that."

The two men glanced at each other and couldn't help but laugh heartily. Neither Ye Li nor Qin Shang had felt this happy in a long time.

As their laughter subsided, Ye Li firmly said, "Old partner, speak honestly. How does Blue Dias make you feel?"

Qin Shang's face sank. Sighing, he said, "You don't need to ask, the Blue Dias Seven Story Pagoda is not as we had imagined. When I was passing through, I did not even get to see the Pagoda's Master. ."

Listening to his words, Ye Li remained silent for a long time. Somewhat depressed, he said, "It seems that we will never have hope."

"No," Qin Shang's eyes brightened as he recalled something excitedly. Ferociously standing up from his bamboo chair, he exclaimed, "Hope absolutely exists, in fact, it is right in front of you."

Eyes burning ablaze, Ye Li spewed out, "What? Quick, tell me. Is there truly hope for us to contend against the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda?"

Qin Shang smiled, sitting down and remaining silent.

Ye Li impatiently demanded, "Why are you putting on airs? Quickly speak, or else I will use force."

Qin Shang said with a smile, "You are still so temperamental, or in this case impetuous. I wonder how you are able to train your Bamboo Dou Qi to such a level. I was accepted by Blue Dias after my assessment indicated that I belonged to the violet rank, ascending the Blue Dias Rainbow Achievement List. When I left, the Blue Dias personnel requested that I assume an office, and I chose Arcadia because you reside here. Thus I have arrived, and if you agree, I wish to stay here for at least a decade."

Ye Li's expression changed. Somewhat suspicious, he voiced, "Old partner, why

do I feel as if you have arranged this whole situation to trap me and curry my favor? Ah! If there was anything you needed to say, you should get right to the point. What is our hope?”

Qin Shang nodded, elaborating, “Well, bluntly speaking, your grandson is our hope.”

Ye Li was startled, “You must have spoken erroneously. You arrived here with Ying’er and her son. Could it be that you did not see that my grandson was naturally born with only eight fingers? Henceforth, it is difficult for him to even grasp a weapon tightly. So how could he be our hope. I just want the child to live peacefully, safe and sound.”

Qin Shang curled his lips, elucidating, “Naturally, that is your perspective, but mine differs vastly. A disciple born naturally with eight fingers is someone I have yearned for in my dreams. The absence of the interfering influence of the little fingers on both hands is a tremendous advantage for the zither. Furthermore, your grandson naturally possesses an exceptionally keen musical awareness. If you consent to him studying the zither under me, in the future he will be the hope that we desire. In all honesty, I chose Arcadia instead of the other powerful countries mainly because you were here. You are aware that when we reached the violet rank, progressing becomes extremely difficult. In addition, a Divine Music mage cultivating at the violet rank is capable of exhibiting formidably powerful zither magic, however, the disadvantage is equally enormous. Thus, I formulated an excellent solution, but this method requires your cooperation.”

Creasing his brows, Ye Li inquired, “My cooperation? I cultivate the Dou Qi of the Bamboo Sect. Why do you need my cooperation?”

Qin Shang explained, “Throughout the continent, only magic logically cooperates with Dou Qi. However, not many people can surpass the indigo rank. Nowadays, mages disdain practicing Dou Qi techniques. The method that I thought up has Dou Qi boosting zither magic, using Dou Qi to strengthen the sonic range and even directly boosting the sonic attack. Only Divine Music mages have the ability to practice such a possibility. And your Bamboo Dou Qi is a breath full of nature and the perfect accompaniment to zither music. I arrived at these conclusions and wish to accept a disciple, requesting that you instruct him in Bamboo Dou Qi as well. As a result, the two of us will produce a superior

Divine Music mage. He may be able to breakthrough the violet rank barrier as well. I had just arrived here and had not selected a disciple yet when I met your daughter-in-law and your grandson. Ah! Being born with eight natural fingers is difficult to find in this world! I absolutely cannot allow this good opportunity to slip by. Old partner, throughout my life I have never asked for much. This time, I must make an exception. I request that you bequeath me the honor of being your grandson's master."

In one move, Qin Shang stood to leave, facing Ye Li and bowing courteously with an exceedingly serious look.

Ye Li evaded to the side, resolutely stating, "No, I disagree. I expect my grandson to inherit my legacy even though he was born with eight fingers."

Qin Shang anxiously said, "Didn't you say earlier that you wanted him to live as an ordinary person? What has changed your mind?"

Ye Li said, "Ordinary person, my Bamboo sect is full of ordinary people. My grandson is the future young Bamboo Sect Headmaster, and you want him to turn to the Zither Sect? What about my Bamboo Sect? Unacceptable. Unacceptable."

Qin Shang unwillingly said, "Ye Zhong and Mei Ying are both young, don't tell me that you are afraid that there will be no more future grandchildren? It is not likely that even a single person out of a million would be born with eight fingers. Old partner, looking back at our many years of friendship, please help me."

Ye Li bitterly laughed, saying, "Not that I don't want to help you, but I can't. Correct, Zhong'er and Ying'er are both young, but they are likely to have only one son. Originally, Ying'er had a difficult birth with my beloved grandson. You must understand, Ying'er is that old Mei Hua's daughter. Mei Hua and I asked old lady Lan Qing to personally come to deliver the child. Fortunately, Lan Qing was present as she was able to save both mother and child without mishap. Lan Qing said, however, that Ying'er cannot bear another child from now on. You can go ask Lan Qing herself."

Listening to Ye Li's words, Qin Shang couldn't help but be disappointed, collapsing in his bamboo chair. The feeling when one's heart was full of hope only to come to nothing was absolutely uncomfortable. For a long time, he and

Ye Li did not speak, the both of them sinking into deep thoughts. At this time, a clear and melodious voice echoed from outside the door, “Father, I heard that a guest has arrived.”

Chapter 2 – The Zither and Bamboo Combination (II)

A tall silhouette outside the door walked inside. Naturally, the youth was tall and possessed an imposing aura, sharing at least eight similarities with Ye Li. Handsome and steadfast, he walked in and brought with him a breath of fresh air, a distinctive attribute of the Bamboo Sect’s Bamboo Dou Qi. It was Ye Li’s son, Ye Zhong.

Ye Li said, “Zhong’er, come greet your Uncle Qin.”

“Uncle Qin, hello. I heard from Ying’er that you seemed to have arrived here because of my son?” Ye Zhong greeted, before asking his query .

Qin Shang’s eyes slightly twinkled with radiance. Smiling, he said, “Zhong’er. I have not seen you since you were young. Pretty good, your Bamboo Dou Qi has reached the primary level yellow Bamboo rank. According to the Rainbow Ranking system, that is equivalent to a primary level green rank.”

Ye Zhong was evidently uninterested about his strength assessment, urgently inquiring, “I have heard from Ying’er that you believe my son is a genius, gifted in studying zither magic, right? If he is, can you accept him as your disciple?”

Qin Shang’s eyes opened while Ye Li’s jaw dropped in shock. He hastily said, “Of course I can, but your father did not agree.”

Ye Zhong turned towards Ye Li. Confused, he asked, “Father, why?”

Ye Li angrily said, “You come out here, daring to speak like this, and ask me why? You are such a child. The Zither Sect and the Bamboo Sect are vastly different studies for him to study in.”

Ye Zhong argued, “But he was born with only eight fingers; he does not have the disposition to inherit the Bamboo Sect Swordplay. Could it be that you do not want your grandson to become a powerful figure in the future? It will not be easy for him to learn our Bamboo Sect teachings, so won’t the Zither Sect magic be perfect for him? This is just your prejudicial parochialism. Did you not say.....”

“You give me no choice,” Ye Li indignantly said, lifting his hand to form a fist to attack his son. Ye Zhong did not dare retaliate. Peng! In the midst of an explosion of brilliant rays of violet light, the bamboo door exploded, flying open as Ye Li’s eyes held a peculiar look. Evidently, Ye Li’s expression was quite serious, but he was actually only using dou qi to force his son to leave the premises. Afterall, what kind of father would actually beat his own son?

Qin Shang glared angrily at Ye Li, growling, “You see, your son is clearly more reasonable than you, Old Bamboo. Just a moment ago, I thought up a new solution, and I think that it would be better this way. You would allow your grandson to study zither magic while simultaneously teaching him Bamboo Dou Qi. In the future, he could return to your Bamboo Sect and its people while we, the Zither Sect, will be inconsequential. How about that?”

Ye Li’s face slightly eased, “On what basis should I believe that you can train my grandson to successfully contend against the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda’s power?”

Qin Shang firmly said, “At this moment, the continent, regardless of magic or dou qi, utilizes the Rainbow Ranking System. The Eight East Imperial Sects are the only exception, however, and regardless of whether or not it’s my four magic sects or your four dou qi sects, in the cultivation process, there are only three types of color transformations. Each color has nine levels, and combined together, it is similar to the Rainbow Ranking Systems. Likewise, the violet rank has nine levels. Despite our efforts, we could only cultivate to the violet rank. The ability to achieve this is a secret that cannot be found outside of our Eight East Imperial Sects, but after 50 years of effort, without innate skill, cultivating beyond the violet rank is easier said than done. The people living throughout the continent are only aware of the existence of Blue Dias and not of our Eight East Imperial Sects.”

Ye Li groaning, grouching, “What a load of crap, do you think I do not know this?.”

Qin Shang said, “Then tell me, what are the three colors and corresponding nine levels of our Zither Sect?”

Ye Li said, “So there’s the Red Zither Heart where you refine the zither heart

soul, the Yellow Zither Heart where you sharpen courage, and the Violet Zither Heart? You are currently at the primary level of the violet rank for the zither heart. In comparison to our Bamboo Sect, the Cyan Bamboo, the Yellow Bamboo, and the Violet Bamboo altogether has a total of 27 levels. The only difference is that the color of our first level is cyan, whereas yours is red, and that your zither magic is much better at intimidating others.”

Qin Shang nodded and said, “Correct, these three colors and nine levels, for a total twenty-seven levels, correlate with the 27 levels of the Rainbow Ranking System. The refinement of the zither heart’s soul throughout its nine levels is most important step according to our Zither Sect. At the Red Zither Heart level, any distracting thoughts are expelled to allow only zither music to penetrate the mind, gradually enhancing cognition and strength towards the Zither.. This is the Orthodox Zither Sect method of cultivation. For a person with ordinary talent, it generally takes them approximately six years to completely refine the soul of the zither heart to begin advancing through the nine levels. However, to refine the soul of the zither heart, a solid foundation is needed, otherwise ascension is challenging. However, how could the cultivation of this Red Zither Heart be compared to a body born with an innate Zither Heart?”

Ye Li doubtfully said, “I am still not very clear on what you mean.”

Qin Shang’s eyes shined brilliantly with resolution, “If you agree to allow your grandson to be my disciple, I will have him refine his zither heart soul to begin his cultivation and, unlike anyone before him, he will practice with a Pure Zither Heart.”

“Eh?” Ye Li, startled, looked over towards Qin Shang, “Your Zither Sect’s secret magical score that was recorded to have never successfully been cultivated? Are you insane?”

Qin Shang unflinchingly said, “I am not insane. In fact, the Pure Zither Heart is the genuine Zither Sect’s cultivation path to enlightenment. Because this method is extremely demanding and incredibly difficult to practice, no one has been able to successfully cultivate it so far. But your son is different. He was born with eight fingers and a high sensitivity and perception of music. I believe that he will succeed. Also, because I am at the violet rank, there is a 70% chance of success. The Pure Zither Heart is vital to refining the zither heart soul. Although

it is difficult for many to cultivate, if it's successful, the door to genuinely cultivate the Zither Heart will open immediately. Thus, it is possible to attain the Violet Zither Heart rank in a short period of time. In addition to this, as long as he is hardworking, he could possibly advance to the highest and most mysterious zither heart found only in legends. And according to my studies, it appears that Dou Qi will be of great assistance to this method. The Blue Dias Seven Pagoda will no longer be terrifying."

Ye Li's voice deepened, "And if you fail?"

Qin Shan unenthusiastically said, "Even if I fail, he has been practicing your Bamboo Sect's Dou Qi all along. You can make him renounce the zither, and there will still be time for him to refine your Bamboo Sect Martial Skills. The Pure Zither Heart is not difficult to understand. If I guessed correctly, during the cultivation of the Pure Zither Heart, his dou qi enhances the tempo to an extraordinarily high velocity sufficient enough to complement late martial skill. Old Partner, this opportunity for our Eight East Imperial Sect is a once in a lifetime chance. Do you really not want to try it? If you agree, my Zither Sect is willing to exchange anything."

Ye Li's eyes flashed violet. Waving his hand, he said, "There is no need for an exchange. I will promise you that I will agree, but you must promise me three conditions."

Qin Shang, without the slightest hesitation, agreed, "Yes, elaborate."

Ye Li said, "First, in the event that he succeeds, he will be the Lord of both the Zither and the Bamboo Sects when he grows up."

Qin Shang nodded, saying, "No problem, if he possess sufficient strength, no one can oppose him. Besides, the inheritance of these sects are ours to determine."

Ye Li continued, "Second, in the premise of success, your Zither Sect's five most renowned zithers are to be given to my grandson."

Qin Shang stared at Ye Li with wide eyes, "You are a good old man; you are not greedy. You know how important our Zither Sect's five most renowned zithers are? The Zither Sect's five most renowned zithers are similar to the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda mages' staves. Naturally, they are comparable to the existence of

divine tools.”

Ye Li lazily said, “If they are not, I don’t want it. Does our Bamboo Sect not deserve those treasured objects? Your Zither Sect must allow me to examine the five zither scores. Anyway, if my grandson also belongs to your Zither Sect he is the future head. Why are you so miserly? The Cry of the Phoenix Zither, the Song of the Dead Forest Dragon Zither, the Music of the Lost Emperor Zither, the Nine Heavenly Jade Rings Zither, and your frequently used Thundering Spring Zither gather together harmoniously. Is this not what you have told me? The better matched the zither and the song are, the greater the zither magic. It is improbable for you to have forgotten this.”

“Extortion, you blackmailing bastard,” Qin Shang furiously swore.

Ye Li laughed darkly, “After all, that is the final condition, or do you not agree?”

Chapter 2 – The Zither and Bamboo Combination (III)

Qin Shang resolutely opened his eyes, glaring back at Ye Li as he helplessly nodded. Clenching his teeth, he gritted, “Very well, I accept your condition.”

With his hands folded behind his back, Ye Li smiled, eyes creasing into thin slits as he said, “This last condition is very simple. Cry uncle.”

Qin Shang stared blankly, “You.....”

Ye Li smiled and said, “Was I mistaken? As you wish to be my grandson’s master, you are naturally inferior to my generation. Crying uncle should not matter”

“Well, old bastard, you’re kidding me.” Qin Shang fiercely advanced towards Ye Li in a rush, feeling no apprehension to the other’s violet ranked warrior strength.

Ye Li did not even employ a dou qi martial skill technique. The two old, violet ranked men far exceeded the age of 60, yet they unexpectedly began grappling each other inside the bamboo house. Neither of them gave way to the other,

and fortunately there were not many items inside the bamboo house to create a mess.

Nonetheless, Qin Shang was a mage, and even with all of his power, his strength was inferior to Ye Li. Dong. Once again, he was pinned against the ground by Ye Li. Flying into a rage of humiliation, Qin Shang said, “No more fighting, I am extremely exhausted.”

Ye Li released Qin Shang, offering a hand and watching as Qin Shang gasped and took deep breaths. He could not refrain from having a full smile on his face.

Ye Li’s eyes exuded a cunning light, kicking his own son, “Hurry, thank your Uncle Qin. The Zither Sect’s origin cultivation meditation song is something everyone in the continent desires to listen to.”

Qin Shang happily said, “I see, you are the idiot. Do you think I care about Yin Zhu less than you? He is the hope I have been searching for throughout my entire life. Even if I injure myself, he will not be injured. Before he is three years old, it is impossible for him to study dou qi. Before he is five years old, it is impossible for him to study the zither. During this time, however, it is of utmost importance for me to play the zither everyday to allow him to listen attentively to my complete zither heart. The child still needs to be taken care of, so Ye Zhong and Mei Ying are permitted to stand to the side and listen in. Therefore, the child will be taken care of, and additionally, their dou qi cultivation will also somewhat benefit.”

Ye Li repeatedly shook his head, “No way, no way. Did I not say that I understood your aural zither power? If my grandson suffers a spiritual magic injury from your aural zither magic, I fear that he will turn into an idiot.”

Qin Shang’s hands rested behind his back as he pretended to look disdainfully at his old friend, “Who said that the infant cannot learn? Even if he cannot learn to play, who said he cannot listen? You think the Pure Zither Heart is that easy to cultivate? No, while he is still a child, we must take advantage of his innate vital energy and not waste his early years. How else can he possibly succeed?”

“Are you feverish? He is barely a month old! How can he learn right now?” Ye Li opened his eyes to look at Qin Shang, who was in front of him. He did not understand this person’s heart or desire.

Over the next ten days, Ye Zhong strived to build the bamboo house to Qin Shang's specifications.

Although it was simple to construct a bamboo house, Qin Shang's requirements were very specific, comprising of the bamboo's angle as well as the house's dimensions, and that even required him to return to Delicate Dew City to purchase special material to use. Afterwards, Ye Zhong, still confused, demanded Qin Shang explain the reason why the bamboo house had to be built with such stringent requirements. It was to produce the best quality resonance for the zither in the bamboo house.

Throughout the continent, warriors were ranked similarly to mages as they were also subdivided into seven levels, a variant of the seven colors of the rainbow: warrior, intermediate warrior, advanced warrior, Earth warrior, Heaven warrior, War master, and Great War master. Although the Bamboo Sect cultivated unique colored dou qi, Ye Zhong only recently entered the Yellow Bamboo Realm, equivalent to the rainbow rank of a primary level green rank. Naturally, this made him an Earth Warrior.

Although Ye Li was the leader of the Bamboo Sect, he lived in the Desolate Jade Sea with his entire family. Ye Li's wife was deceased, so it was only him, his son, his daughter-in-law, and his grandson, four people in total. The inclusion of Qin Shang only added another person. Of course, the bamboo house was spacious, but Qin Shang was determinedly unwilling to live together with them. At his request, Ye Zhong build a bamboo house 500 meters away from their residence. As a green ranked Earth warrior, this was a simple matter.

Qin Shang returned to Delicate Dew City to quickly prepare some simple arrangements. Early in the morning the next day, he immediately returned to Desolate Jade Sea. Even though he had just recently become president of the Magic Guild, it was quite clear that he would not spend too much time and effort on the Arcadian Magic Guild. In his heart, there was nothing except for the desire to mentor his disciple, the naturally born genius with eight fingers, which was a far more important affair.

The two formidable men who never ran rampant in the continent glanced at each other, unhurriedly staring into the other's eyes. Finally, there was a glimmer of hope for their envisioned future. Naturally, Ye Yin Zhu was their

vision for the future, for the Eight East Imperial Sects as well.

Qin Shang shot Ye Li a glance, “At least you are sincere.”

Ye Li delightedly said, “Good, I promise you. Well, aren’t you worried about the issue of seniority? To the outside world, you are his master, and when we are alone, I allow the baby to call you grandfather too.”

Qin Shang wistfully said, “It will not forever be out of the question. Until he reaches the age of 15, you must not teach him any martial skills to avoid any distractions. If, by the time he turns 15, he is incapable of attaining the nine levels of the Pure Zither Heart, I’m afraid that I have failed.”

Ye Li said, “Forbidden from ever learning martial skills? Without any Bamboo Sect martial skills, how would he become the Bamboo Sect Leader?”

Qin Shang elaborated, “The Pure Zither Heart is extremely difficult to cultivate. To successfully cultivate, it is necessary to do as much as possible immediately to allow the baby to maintain the purity and innocence. In other words, he is not allowed to have contact with the outside world as much as possible. It is vital that even you maintain the minimalist of contact with him apart from Bamboo Dou Qi. Unless I consent, you must not teach him any martial skills. Fittingly, after he turns three years old, every week you can only see him once, and he cannot be told of external matters. By deliberately concentrating on his purity and innocence, he will rapidly cultivate his Pure Zither Heart successfully.”

Ye Li looked at Qin Shang, conscientiously standing up and nodding as he said, “Explain.”

Qin Shang snappily replied, “I’m not like you! I am only looking out for the baby’s well-being. Of course, you will never mention again the matter about me being inferior to you in this generation; to each his own opinion.”

Haha. Ye Li laughed, saying, “Why? Are you already seeking compensation so soon?”

“Old Bamboo, I promise to uphold your conditions. As a result, you consent to me being your grandson’s master, and you must also promise me a few conditions as well.”

“You……” Looking at Ye Li’s pleased expression, Qin Shang just realized that he

had indeed been deceived and unfortunately once again left with no other alternative.

Ye Li snorted, saying, “Who told you to visit and look for me? Ye Zhong is a foolish boy, not understanding how to maximize the benefits. There is no need to advocate parochialism, as I originally stated. If I did not promptly expel him outside, he would have exposed himself. How would I have maximized my benefits then? Two sect leaders must prioritize the Eight East Imperial Sects first. Haha.”

Qin Shang furiously asked, “Then why are you deliberately making things difficult?”

Ye Li blatantly nodded, saying, “Ah, yes!”

Qin Shang suddenly grabbed Ye Li’s beard, very fiercely saying, “You should have agreed to my request from the beginning.”

“Old Qin, bestow a name upon my grandson. This boy is barely a month old, yet he still has no name.”

Qin Shang knew that this was Ye Li’s genuine promise just now. A flash of enlightenment graced his mind, and he said, “Call him Ye Yin Zhu, the successor of my zither and your bamboo.”

Ye Li laughed, “Very well, he is called Ye Yin Zhu.”

Chapter 2 – The Zither and Bamboo Combination (IV)

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Since the day Ye Li made a fool of Qin Shang, it could be said that Ye Zhong greatly admired his father. Laughing darkly, he hastily pulled Mei Ying and Ye Yin Zhu into his embrace, stepping forward to thank him.

Qin Shang stared blankly. He just realised that he was clearly deceived once again, unfortunately left with no alternative against Ye Li. Pointing at Ye Li, he said, “So, you inferred that I would use my origin cultivation meditation song, you! You! Now, I finally understand that you are actually an old crafty bastard.”

The origin cultivation meditation song was tremendously beneficial for martial practitioners. With the song, there was no need to worry about dou qi revolving too quickly and then magically bursting into flames, and it could eliminate distracting thoughts in one's heart. These two effects were precisely why martial practitioners yearned for this even in their dreams. Experiencing the zither music drew heaven and earth into motion, attracting elemental energy which would strengthen the foundation of one's cultivation. This in turn greatly increased the martial practitioner's cultivation speed. As the Zither Sect Clan leader, Qin Shang's performance of the origin cultivation meditation song was highly coveted by everyone for its benefits.

Even if Qin Shang was the newly-appointed Arcadian Magic Guild President, he immediately moved to the Desolate Jade Sea to live there. As such, little Yin Zhu grew up with the sound of leaves dancing in the spring breeze and the echo of the gurgling clear autumn waters as he slowly matured.....

Six years later.

As the first rays of sunlight entered the bamboo house, it was accompanied by the deep and low soft notes of the zither. Ye Yin Zhu slowly awakened from his meditation. He couldn't help but groan as he aroused from the warm and cozy state he was in.

The six years old Ye Yin Zhu, was pretty, resembling a girl. Black hair draped over his shoulders, scattering loosely behind his back. Blessed with a pair of huge black eyes that were bright and full of emotions, he wore a somewhat oversized white gown, however, it didn't influence his temperament which possessed the elegance of the heavens. None of his movements lacked a graceful air. Even someone of nobility could not be compared to him. Although he was still a child, sitting there, his bearing indicated that he was impervious to desires and passions, his serene expression was indeed startling. A faint cyan and red aura that encompassed his whole body gradually dispersed and dimmed, the cyan radiance was slightly prominent and strong, but the red light was richly dark.

The sound of the zither stopped, Qin Shang withdrew his hands as he looked slightly exhausted. "Yin Zhu, it appears that your dou qi has improved once again."

“Yes! Grandfather Qin, yesterday grandfather arrived and talked to me for some time. It seems as if I have already entered the last Cyan Bamboo rank.” Little Yin Zhu excitedly bounced up from the ground to stand up, his face full of childish sincerity. He ran up to Qin Shang and imploringly asked, “Grandfather Qin, shouldn’t you teach me a new song today? I studied with you for a year, and you have only taught me one song, nothing more.”

Qin Shang faintly smiled, saying, “The moment has still not come. You must understand that the principle of studying hundreds of songs is useless. Only by genuinely understanding the secrets of the zither heart will your talent continuously improve.”

Six years had passed by. Qin Shang painstakingly poured all of his efforts into grooming Ye Yin Zhu. Every day, he would play the zither near Ye Yin Zhu for at least half a day so he could listen. The zither sound was mystical, Ye Yin Zhu’s graceful and efficaciously elegant temperament became increasingly distinct. From the age of three, Ye Yin Zhu followed his Grandfather Ye Li to practice Bamboo Dou Qi where Ye Li persistently used his own tremendous dou qi for a year to assist his grandson in unblocking his meridians, enabling Ye Yin Zhu to improve effortlessly and efficiently since the beginning, finding a knack for it. When he was five years old, Qin Shang impart on him the secret of zither magic. Up until now, for a whole year, Qin Shang only taught Ye Yin Zhu the basic fundamentals of fingering the zither and the most simple zither song << Green Water >>, nothing more.

Ye Yin Zhu discontentedly said, “But, I already mastered the song!”

Qin Shang indifferently smiled and said, “Did you truly master it? Very well, come and follow me.” Stretching his body, Qin Shang carried the Thundering Spring Zither as he rose, bringing Ye Yin Zhu away from the bamboo house.

Ye Li’s whole family kept their word and only came to visit Yin Zhu once a month ever since Yin Zhu started to study zither music under Qin Shang. Naturally, the occasional secret visits to see Yin Zhu were unavoidable.

Coming out of the bamboo house to face the vast bamboo forest, Qin Shang stopped walking, and asked, “Yin Zhu, what are the three types of zither sounds and their meanings?”

Ye Yin Zhu, already accustomed to Qin Shang's evaluations, unhesitantly answered, "The three types of sounds are the open string, the vibrato, and the harmonic. The open string is produced when the right hand plucks a string, the sound wide and thickly timbre. The vibrato originates from the left hand pressing and sliding slightly against the strings on the left side of the zither, while the right hand plucks the string; it emits a soft, graceful, and mellow timbre. The gentle harmonic is produced when both hands pluck the strings of the instrument in tandem, the tone loud and crystal-clear. These three types of sounds blend together to make a zither song."

Qin Shang nodded and said, "Correct, playing the zither has varying difficulties. There are the most basic harmonics at the seven strings and thirteen emblems producing 91 different notes. In addition, these open string and vibrato notes have many pairings, groupings and various combinations that are far too numerous to count. If you do not understand the fundamentals of good practice, in the future how would you be somewhat successful?"

Yin Zhu cutely nodded and said, "Grandfather Qin, I know my mistake. I will continue to cultivate my basic skills."

Qin Shang faintly smiled. Even though his words criticized Yin Zhu, his disciple took them to heart, to his satisfaction. Although Ye Yin Zhu only studied the zither for a year, ever since he was a month old until he was five years old, he grew up listening to the sound of the zither. As far as he was concerned, it could be said that he was very familiar with the sound of the zither and not inferior to Qin Shang's own familiarity. As well as being a genius in studying the zither to an unprecedented high at such a young age, he has already obtained such deep understanding and comprehension. He was absolutely a genius among geniuses.

Qin Shang handed the Thundering Spring Zither to Ye Yin Zhu, permitting him to sit at the bamboo table in front of the bamboo forest. He said, "So, if you are capable of employing the <<Green Water>> song, all of the animals in the forest will gather at your side and consider you to be their most intimate friend. I will teach you a new song if this occurs. Well, you can start practicing while I pick up breakfast for you."

Ye Yin Zhu nodded, resting the Thundering Spring Zither on top of the bamboo table delicately. Sitting upright and still, both of his hands reached out to play.

As his eight fingers were just about to touch the stringed instrument, his temperament changed once again. His innocent face was still present somewhat, but now matured with a tranquility and grace way beyond his age. As his eight fingers strummed the song <<Green Water>>, the sound gently echoed out towards their surroundings.

The zither music was sinuous and pleasant to the ears, however, Qin Shang puckered his brows. “The heart and the zither lack synchronization. If you cannot synchronize the zither resonance, your zither notes will eternally be incapable of attracting any living creature’s spirit.”

Ye Yin Zhu raised his head to look at Qin Shang, hand movements not pausing, but his eyes swiftly closed instead. His small beautiful face exuded a faint smile, and even though the zither song was still <<Green Water>>, the aura of the surroundings had already slightly changed. His whole person seemed to be immersed in the green hills and clear waters. A faint red radiance emerged from his body, floating in the air and releasing into the surroundings.

Watching this scene, Qin Shang nodded, pleased. In his heart, he secretly sighed. ‘Ye Li, ah! You only knew that the Zither Sect’s zither magic was a uniquely strong magic. You did not know, however, that the spirit is strongly connected to magic, especially for Divine Music mages. You absolutely cannot imagine the difficulty of this cultivation method.’

Chapter 3 – Blade of Music (I)

Spirit Magic was a different type of magic. First of all, one's own spirit must be strong and powerful, afterwards a special method would be needed to materialize it. It was possible to influence every aspect of the opponent's own spirit. If elemental magic was utilized to destroy the opponent's physical body, then spirit-empowered magic would destroy the opponent's soul.

For zither music to strengthen the spirit it needed to be strong, allowing them to utilize the zither music to release spiritual force. The zither song's different characteristics produced various spiritual sonics waves that could either be utilized offensively or for support. This was the secret of zither magic.

Inside the quiet bamboo forest, a magnanimously deep and low song unceasingly played, lightly resounding throughout. Six year old Ye Yin Zhu, apart from practicing dou qi, also studied the zither and the Pure Zither Heart, enabling him to be calm and ignore any distractions in whatever he did. He played the zither song <<Green Water>> over and over again, with no regard towards the passage of time. His whole being was immersed in the secret of the zither song.

Under the influence of the zither music, various kinds of small animals within the bamboo forest began to converge around the zither. Although they only dared to observe from a distance, it was obvious that they had begun to be intoxicated with Ye Yin Zhu's zither music.

"Yi, who are you?" Qin Shang, who had just returned from the bamboo house a few moments ago holding a bamboo basket full of food, suddenly grunted in a low voice. The zither music stopped, and Yin Zhu opened his eyes and followed Qin Shang's gaze.

He did not realized until now that there was a little boy crouching down five meters away from Ye Yin Zhu. He was sitting there, blankly staring at Ye Yin Zhu's zither. He appeared to be approximately the same size as Yin Zhu, but he fell far short of Yin Zhu's good looks. The contours of his face, however, gave people a unique feeling of strength and resolution despite only being a child! He astonishingly possessed extraordinarily unique violet hair. In the entire human

race, violet colored hair was exceptionally rare.

Hearing Qin Shang's voice, the little boy awoke from his trance, his originally lifeless eyes now displayed intense hostility. With fists clenched and lips pursed, he waited for Qin Shang to act without saying a word.

Yin Zhu excitedly ran up to Qin Shang's side, taking the thin bamboo basket and laughingly said, "Grandfather Qin, look. My zither music attracted a person." While speaking, he withdrew the freshly peeled bamboo shoots from the basket, handing over some to the violet haired boy as well. Facing him, he said, "Hi, this is a treat for you, but who are you?"

The little violet haired boy shifted his gaze to Qin Shang before a smile full of brightness and naivety broke out on his face as he turned to face Yin Zhu. Gradually, his fists began to unclench, and he took the bamboo shoot in Yin Zhu's hand, nodding to him. Before Qin Shang could ask any more questions, the boy scurried off into the bamboo forest in the blink of an eye and disappeared.

Watching the violet haired boy's back disappear, Qin Shang couldn't help but frown, creasing his brow. Could it be that the Bewildering Footsteps Spell already lost its effectiveness? It appeared that the violet haired boy was quite hostile to him, but he became relaxed with just one look at Yin Zhu? Could it be that he was really attracted by Yin Zhu's zither music and thus came over? However, he was only a mage, and it was impossible for him to chase after the little boy so he had no other alternative but to allow him to escape.

During the day he played the zither with Qin Shang, and in the evening he practiced dou qi. This was Ye Yin Zhu's simple life. However, the appearance of the violet haired boy has since then added a little color to his simple lifestyle.

Every morning, when Yin Zhu began to play the zither, the little violet haired boy would quietly appear and remain at his side motionlessly, listening to him play the zither. Yin Zhu's study of the zither didn't seem to be so lonely anymore with his audience of one.

Ever since the first time the violet haired boy appeared, he was unable to get him to speak a single word. In addition, it was only in Yin Zhu's presence that he had a serene expression. When Qin Shang, Yin Zhu's parents, or paternal grandfather arrived to see him, the violet haired boy would immediately leave.

Ye Zhong once secretly followed the violet haired boy, wanting to finally discover where the boy came from, but he only discovered that the violet haired boy lived in the Desolate Jade Sea in a location that was not more than two kilometer away from Yin Zhu's zither cultivation area. He probably was not an ordinary child. Inside the bamboo forest, he survived off of the bamboo shoots. The lonely and icily arrogant violet haired boy was gradually acknowledged by everyone, but he still would not speak, even to Yin Zhu. Since he could not communicate, it was naturally impossible for him to influence Yin Zhu's Pure Zither Heart. Thus, Qin Shang and Yin Zhu's family accepted his existence. Yin Zhu leisurely passed time by frequently talking to him and providing clothes for him to wear. He had his parents deliver food for the boy to eat, but the violet haired boy would merely accept it all silently, without saying a word. In Yin Zhu's eyes, however, he became increasingly gentle and soft.

The seasons came and left, ten years passed by in the blink of an eye. The handsome child matured into an attractive and good looking youth. Yin Zhu's appearance resembled Ye Zhong's in six aspects, but he also inherited his mother's gentle beauty. At the age of 16, he was 1.8 meters tall with a well proportioned stature, wearing his white gown all year round. In addition, with his black hair draped down, he looked well cared for. He was a handsome young man.

"Little Violet, Little Violet, where are you?" Wearing a white chang pao, Ye Yin Zhu looked off to one side while walking, yelling loudly. The clear and melodious voice resounded inside the bamboo forest, resembling the elegance of zither music.

Yin Zhu shouted for half a day with no response. He could not help but pause his search, as he mumbled to himself, "Where did Little Violet go? How did he disappear without a trace?" A flash of light appeared in his eyes, and a smile emerged on his face. "I've got it!" As he said this, he immediately sat cross-legged on the ground. The middle finger of his left hand sparked with a silvery light. Suddenly, a zither appeared before him out of nowhere. The roundish zither's body had a thick belt and was carved from Aleurites cordata wood. It was yellow and had an ancient quality chestnut lacquered carapace with a serpent belly grain pattern. It had the clam emblem, a round dragon pool, and

an oval phoenix pond. The tiny dragon pool received sound prosperously, and the goose foot was made excessively of vividly red agate.

He stared at his zither for some time, his gentle and clear eyes immediately becoming somewhat infatuated. “The <<Three Variations of Yangguan>> song is peaceful and calm and is played in the Nine Heavenly Jade Ring Zither. I do not believe that you would resist listening to it.”

His eight fingers lightly stroked the zither, immediately a touching melancholic zither music emerged, sounding throughout the air. This was a representative farewell song, as seen by the touching mood created. In that instant, as the zither music emerged, Yin Zhu had already completely merged with the zither music and its artistic atmosphere.

A dark red radiance slowly encompassed him, spiraling around his body. Four circular sound waves formed and drifted throughout the air. Desolate Jade Sea did not have large animals, but at this moment, all of the birds and small animals quickly sped towards Yin Zhu’s direction to converge and listen to his performance. In just a moment, the sound of every kind of animal unceasingly crying out in lament echoed, and Yin Zhu’s surroundings gradually began bustling with noise and excitement.

<<Three Variations of Yangguan>> was a song of a reluctant farewell between friends, therefore the zither music brimmed with the mood of a unwilling goodbye. In Yin Zhu’s mind, he gradually began thinking about how he had not emerged out of the Desolate Jade Sea in 16 years. His eyes couldn’t help but dim and exude sorrow, making his graceful temperament feel somewhat melancholic.

The heart-rending song <<Three Variations of Yangguan>> concluded, and Yin Zhu’s hands pressed the zither for the lingering sound to gradually dissipate. Somewhat sorrowful, he said, “I’m sorry partner, I really must go. However, I will definitely come back to see you. I must unexpectedly leave, but both of my grandfathers told me that I must explore the outside world. This song is my farewell to you.”

At an unknown point in time, a tall figure appeared behind Yin Zhu. Listening to the zither music, the expression on his face couldn’t help but stiffen slightly.

He subconsciously lifted his right hand to grab Yin Zhu’s shoulder.

Chapter 3 – Blade of Music (II)

Yin Zhu seemingly already knew he was behind him. Lowering his head, he said, “Little Violet, I must leave.”

The silhouette flashed, and the tall figure behind him had already arrived in front of Yin Zhu. 16 years old and 1.8 meters tall, Yin Zhu was not short when compared to an ordinary person. But standing next to this man, there was a significant height difference. With his disarrayed violet hair, this tall, strong person appeared to be brimming with explosive power. His chiseled facial features portrayed a man of steel and stability. A pair of violet eyes resembled the stars in their brightness. His broad shoulders seemed to be able to carry everything.

As Ye Yin Zhu grew up, so did Little Violet. In ten years, his body developed rapidly, making Ye Yin Zhu’s family gasp in amazement. His height exceeded 2 meters, making him look more mature than Ye Yin Zhu. He didn’t have the slightest bit of purity radiating from his eyes like Yin Zhu’s eyes. Instead, his eyes held a deep profoundness.

Both of his hands grabbed Yin Zhu’s shoulders. Little Violet’s eyes were puzzled and curious.

Feeling the scorching heat of Little Violet’s hands, Yin Zhu raised his head to look at him and sadly said, “I truly must leave to practice the zither. I specially came to bid you farewell. My two grandfathers said that I have finally practice the Pure Zither Heart to the ninth level and am on the verge of entering the Courageous Zither Heart realm. I no longer need to remain isolated from the outside world. They have allowed me to attend school to study outside knowledge and adapt to the outside society. Therefore, I must leave at once. Ah, Little Violet, what is the outside world like? I still haven’t gone outside, but grandfather says that in order for me to understand the outside world better they won’t see me off when I leave.”

The puzzlement in Little Violet’s eyes gradually disappeared, and he nodded

slowly. He released Yin Zhu's hands. "I will go with you."

"Really? That's truly fantastic," Ye Yin Zhu said with exultation. Like a child, he jumped up and stood, only to rapidly become aware of Little Violet's abnormally strange action. "You, you spoke?"

Yes, this was the first time that Little Violet had spoken ever since he had come to Desolate Jade Sea ten years ago. Up until this point, everyone considered him to be mute, but he had just spoken. The low and sonorous voice gave people a very depressing feeling, but this voice, to Yin Zhu's ears, gave him a sense of security.

Little Violet patted Yin Zhu's shoulder, saying, "Go." While talking, he was already beginning to walk in the direction of the Desolate Jade Sea.

Originally on the verge of starting a lonely journey and being somewhat terrified, Ye Yin Zhu was now brimming with excitement. He spent practically every day with Little Violet for ten years. Even though Little Violet never spoke, they communicated through meaningful gazes. Little Violet was his only audience for ten years, so he already considered him to be one of his most trusted people and his best friend. The unknown outside world no longer appeared to be so frightening now that he had Little Violet accompanying him.

Cheering, Yin Zhu moved and caught up to Little Violet in a flash, so that they could walk together towards the outside world.

"Little Violet, what is your real name?" Yin Zhu inquisitively asked as they walked side by side. Apart from playing the zither and studying Bamboo Sect things, in regards to the outside world affairs, he was like a blank sheet of paper. His childhood was carefree and without worries. And now, before Yin Zhu even left Desolate Jade Sea, he has already almost forgotten about separating from his family. Having Little Violet accompany him, his heart was no longer panic-stricken. All that remains was curiosity and excitement. After all, this was his first time leaving Desolate Jade Sea.

"You can call me Zi."

"Oh, Zi, where did you come from? I heard grandfather say that you are not one of us from the Desolate Jade Sea. Grandfather Qin that you are not malicious to me and like my zither songs, and that was why you stuck around,

right?”

Zi's reply was not complicated as he merely nodded.

Yin Zhu was perhaps too excited. Today, in particular, he asked questions incessantly throughout the journey, but Zi would not talk; many times he would just nod or shake his head in response all the way to Luna City where Yin Zhu began to slightly calm down.

“Wow, this is the city? It seems really big and beautiful.” Looking at Luna City's city walls and the endless stream of people, Yin Zhu was unable to express his excitement. He quickly proceeded in the direction of the city gate.

“Desolate Jade Sea is the most beautiful place.” Looking at Yin Zhu running ahead, Zi lightly shook his head.

Luna City contained almost everything Yin Zhu had never seen. In order to cultivate his Pure Zither Heart, for 16 years he did not leave the Desolate Jade Sea. Now with his curiosity and excitement, it felt like his eyes were not sufficient enough to see everything.

“Where must you go to school?” Zi, who rarely spoke, asked Yin Zhu a question.

Yin Zhu subconsciously said, “Grandfather Qin told me to go to the Luna City Magic Guild to retrieve an item. He gave me a map. I will be able to find the college by following the map's instructions, and then I'll need to hand over his letter to the headmaster.”

Zi extended his hand out and said, “Map.”

Originating from his heart, Yin Zhu trusted Zi. Without the slightest of hesitation, he fished out from his bosom a special sheepskin map, handing it over to Zi.

Zi unfolded the map and discovered that it depicted a drawing of the whole continent. On the map was a red line that starts from Luna City and ends at a different location. At the endpoint were tiny characters, reading “Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.”

Wrinkling his brow, Zi said, “You must go to the Milan Empire; your

grandfathers must really be worried.”

Yin Zhu was unfamiliar with the local geography, and not understanding, he inquisitively asked, “Milan Empire? Is it really that far?”

Zi nodded, saying, “To get to Milan, you’ll need to pass through the kingdom of Wavast, which is located in the southern border of Arcadia. While Milan is considered to be in the northern region of the continent, further up north from Milan is the Northern Wasteland.” As he discussed the Northern Wasteland, his pupils slightly dilated all of a sudden, but it instantly returned back to normal. Nevertheless, Yin Zhu still noticed this change.

“Zi, you need not be afraid. Even if the place is distant, you have me. I will protect you.” While saying this, Yin Zhu childishly pounded his chest.

Zi stared blankly. “You?”

Yin Zhu earnestly nodded, “Yes! I will protect you. Grandfather Qin said that I am already a qualified mage.”

Looking at Yin Zhu who was a head shorter than him, a faint smile emerged on Zi’s face, making the rigid lines of his face seemingly soften.

“Wow! Zi, you smiled. How rare, I don’t think I have ever seen you smile before.” Yin Zhu seemed to have discovered a whole new world as he gazed at Zi’s fierce look.

Zi helplessly said, “Well, we should go to the Magic Guild.” Fortunately, the Magic Guild in Luna City was the most well known place in the city. Zi asked a random person on the roadside for directions, leading Yin Zhu to the place.

Even after ten years, Luna City’s Magic Guild was still desolate without even a janitor. Yin Zhu and Zi followed the road and walked for half a kilometer to arrive quickly outside the door of the guild hall. Even without entering, they could hear quarreling voices inside.

There were nine individuals altogether inside the hall, divided into two factions. Di Ya La led one faction and behind him was Pi’er Luo and another Fire mage. The opposing faction was composed of six other mages, their mage gowns and attire distinctly different. From their mage gowns, it could be discerned that there was one Indigo Rank Mage Scholar, two Green Rank Great Mages, and

three Yellow Rank Advanced Mages.

Chapter 3 – Blade of Music (III)

Di Ya La angrily said, “Lu Fei Te, you should not be unduly. Do not forget that in the beginning you also came from here.”

The one called Lu Fei Te was an Indigo Rank Mage Scholar who appeared to be 50-60 years old. His stature was not tall, but arrogant and overbearing. On his chest was a flame emblem indicating that he was a Fire Mage Scholar. With two hands behind his back, his face had an air of haughtiness as he said disdainfully, “Correct, I originated from here as well. Even to this day, I couldn’t be happier that I made the decision to leave. As you see, does this magic guild even befit its national status? There’s only the three of you. Furthermore, after all these years, you still haven’t broken pass the Cyan Rank. What’s more you are probably not even at the peak of the Cyan Rank. Di Ya La, do not continue to be obstinate; follow us to Wavast. The Wavast Royal Family absolutely values talented mages. You would surely be looked upon favourably.”

“Praise Blue Dias. Lu Fei Te, you are an Arcadian. Don’t tell me that you forgot your roots?” Di Ya La’s voice trembled. After all, he was facing Lu Fei Te, who had been one of Arcadia’s most promising mages. But now, he was Wavast’s emissary here in Arcadia.

Lu Fei Te sneered, “Looks like you haven’t changed and just as stubborn. Where is the president of your guild? Summon him. If he is able to defeat me, then we will immediately leave. If not, do not blame me for being rude.”

Di Ya La angrily said, “Lu Fei Te, do not forget that this is Arcadia, not Wavast. How dare you be impolite?” His heart could not help but be sorrowful. Currently, Arcadia had already fallen so low that it could be bullied to such a degree.

Lu Fei Te thickly said, “We are here representing the Kingdom of Wavest in negotiations with Arcadia. With our status as an official emissary, even if we were to kill you, I’m afraid the Arcadian Royal Family will not dare to do anything about it. Could it be that your so-called president is a headless turtle? Does he not have the guts to accept my challenge?”

“Grandfather Qin is not a coward. I accept your challenge in his place.” Just as Di Ya La was about to erupt in anger, a clear, bright, beautiful voice echoed from outside the door. It was precisely Ye Yin Zhu that spoke.

With the sudden arrival of the voice, all of the mages in the hall immediately looked in the direction of the door to see that the elegant Yin Zhu and the stoic, tall Zi had already walked in.

Zi merely stood by Yin Zhu’s side. Now, he had returned to his previous demeanor in Desolate Jade Sea, quiet and reserved without saying a word.

Yin Zhu glared at Lu Fei Te. Since he was born, he only had contact with his family, Zi, and Qin Shang. Qin Shang cared for him and taught him in every possible way. He spent the most time with Qin Shang. In Yin Zhu’s heart, Qin Shang was already close family, and although he did not understand what it means to be a headless turtle, he knew it was not a compliment.

Lu Fei Te, somewhat amazed, looked at Yin Zhu. This handsome young man adorned in a white gown entered through the door, projecting upon people a bright feeling. Especially his two clear, black eyes which easily imparted a feeling of deep profoundness upon people.

“Did I mishear? You want to challenge me?”

Yin Zhu nodded seriously and said, “Grandfather Qin is not present, so I will take his place and accept your challenge.”

“You, a youngster?” Di Ya La asked Yin Zhu.

Yin Zhu looked at Di Ya La and softly smiled, but he did not reply. Instead, he immediately took a seat on the ground. He does not understand social etiquettes, in his heart there was only anger towards Lu Fei Te, and he did not want to waste any more time to challenge him..

Everyone was somewhat surprised as the reddish-brown Thundering Spring Zither appeared above his legs, already floating in the air.

The Thundering Spring Zither was 39 inches long, 7 inches wide at the shoulder, and 4.5 inches wide at the tail. It was reddish brown in color with fine segmented lines forming a snakeskin-like pattern. On the back of the zither, above the dragon pond, were two characters, “Thundering Spring.” The zither’s

thirteen zither string tuning pegs were inlaid with white jade. One of the five treasured zithers of the Zither Sect, it could produce a pure and soft sound. For a Divine Music mage, the zither was his magical staff.

“I’m about to start.” Yin Zhu’s left hand hung suspended above the zither body as his right hand lightly flicked the strings, producing a deep rich sound hum. Dark red rays of light were emitted from Yin Zhu’s body and lingered in the air, his eyes already glazing over to focus solely on the strings above. In merely an instant, his resentment completely vanished, and his graceful, aristocratic temperament with a gentle and sorrowful air appeared. Unfortunately, the six mages across from him only saw the red radiance emitting from him and did not take notice of his change in expressions.

What does this dark red magical strength mean? It was the lowest level of the Red Rank, that’s all. Even if he was at the Advanced Level Red Rank, he would still be an ordinary mage, not even an intermediate mage. Lu Fei Te and 6 of the mages present were at least Advanced Mages. But this handsome young man appeared to be a Divine Music mage. Yin Zhu’s body began emitting rays of light. They couldn’t help but burst into laughter as they stood up.

“Ah, it’s you. Praise Blue Dias,” Di Ya La widened his eyes in amazement. He looked at Yin Zhu’s hands and his eight fingers, suddenly realizing who this child before his eyes was. However, before he could stop him, the zither music already began to fill the air.

With Yin Zhu’s mind devoted completely to the zither, he already forgot about his surroundings, possibly neglecting everything of the outside world. His heart harmonized with the heartstrings of the zither, and his mind recalled Qin Shang’s profound teachings regarding the correlation between the fingers and the strings, sound and denotation, form and spirit, virtue and art. His mouth muttered, “The essence of music should have a deep profoundness.”

In the blink of an eye, the guild hall brightened. Light emitted from two locations; the first came from the magical tessellation in the middle of the guild hall, and the other from Yin Zhu’s seven-stringed Thundering Spring Zither resting upon his knees. Silver light blossomed momentarily as Yin Zhu’s voice containing countless magical power roared. The contemptful eyes froze in a flash. A string of low sinuous and endlessly touching zither music rose in a spiral

along with the dark red light, making the whole guild hall interior sparkle.

The melody was somewhat sorrowful, but nevertheless it was immensely profound. This was the same song Yin Zhu used to bid farewell to his friends in the bamboo forest, <<Three Variations at Yangguan>>. But with a different mentality and different zither, the effect was completely distinct. Now this sad and gentle air thickened in a split second. At once, everyone present felt heavy in their hearts. Even the air elemental magic was affected as it became sluggish and thick.

Lu Fei Te’s eyebrows furrowed. He discovered with astonishment that the zither music made his mood somewhat frenetic, altering the atmosphere in general. His heart became frightened. Apparently this young Divine Music mage was not simple. Unfortunately, he did not turn around to look at his comrades. If he did, perhaps he would have attached more importance to Yin Zhu. The two Green Rank mages already held lifeless look in their eyes, their faces which were brimming with heartily laughter now motionless. In addition, the three Yellow Rank mages already had glazed eyes while their bodies began to lightly sway involuntarily. Clearly they were already losing control of their bodies.

Spirit mages held the nickname of mage killer. For someone to face a spirit mage’s chants was easier said than done.

Lu Fei Te could only give voice to the first section of the magic chant before he was overwhelmed. Horrified, he found that the bizarre zither music interrupted his magical chant which was how he communicated with air elemental magic, via special intonations. Predispositioned to the heaven and earth, magic could be persuaded to connect to the elemental magics. He was unable to complete a chant even though his spirit power was exceedingly strong. Lu Fei Te couldn’t help but be somewhat panicked.

Chapter 3 – Blade of Music (IV)



Yin Zhu was completely unaware of everything occurring in the outside world. The pinnacle of the <<Three Variations at Yangguan>> song were three plucked notes, a heavy vibrato, and three harmonizing vibratos. Now with the end of the

first variation, Yin Zhu's hands appeared illusionary as they touched the strings. Immediately, the zither music tempo sped up, and the solidification of the stagnant air intensified in strength. Only the Indigo Rank mage Lu Fei Te was able to maintain a clear head, unlike the two Green Rank mages and the three Yellow Rank mages who completely lost awareness of their surroundings. Engrossed in the zither music, Di Ya La and the other two mages were also affected, but to a different degree. The only one who was completely unaffected by this was Zi who stood right behind Yin Zhu.

Yin Zhu's strength was actually equivalent to a Yellow Rank Advanced Mage upon reaching the ninth level of the Pure Zither Heart. It was only because his breakthroughs were solely dedicated to the Pure Zither Heart that his aura remained red, hence the misidentification by his opponents. In the 16 years of his zither career, how could his strength be weak? Not to mention mages of equal rank, any mage within three ranks of him were affected by the zither music. Moreover, his opponents had no defense against the music. Even if the mage was an Advanced level Green Rank, he would still be affected.

As the dark red light intensified, the air elemental magic seemed to follow the zither music and danced to its continuous rhythm. The gloomy and sorrowful zither music already concealed this great danger. As a zither mage, he actually used his zither music to its greatest extent, directly attacking them all. This was a power that could single-handedly challenge six higher ranked opponents, all at once. In all honesty, this was something only Yin Zhu could accomplish.

Lu Fei Te felt more and more of the zither music's influence. In his heart he felt wounded, but he was an Indigo Rank mage. His strength was three ranks above Yin Zhu at the seventh and eighth level of indigo power. Therefore, he could still steady his spiritual force and halt the music's bewildering effect. He bit his tongue; under the effect of pain, he was able to sober up immediately after. He waved his right hand and grasped a slender magic staff that appeared out of nowhere. With the flick of his wrist, a large ball of fire instantly flew towards Yin Zhu.

Any mage could instantaneously use their current rank's magic and magic three ranks lower. For example, a Green Rank mage could use Red Rank magic, without any chants. Soundlessly, he used instantaneous magic to finish off his

opponent. Lu Fei Te only had murderous intentions. Even now, he still did not take this “Red Rank” Divine Music mage seriously.

That large ball of fire appeared orange. While flustered, Lu Fei Te could still cast Orange Rank magic. This made him rather overbearing. In a blink of an eye, that orange fireball arrived in front of Yin Zhu.

Di Ya La intended to block it, this Cyan Rank mage was clear-headed. However, with his strength, there was not enough time to block the magic that had already been cast. He could not help but cry out in alarm.

Zi quietly clenched his fist. Yin Zhu suddenly raised his head at that moment, his bright eyes exuding a strange luster. His eight fingers had not stopped playing; instead a faint yellow radiance had unknowingly already filled his hands for an undetermined amount of time. The zither music was magnified almost instantly. A loud hum followed by yellowish-red lights emerged and floated in the air, surrounding the orange fireball above.

With a bang, the orange fireball was crushed into a speck of light and disappeared.

Yin Zhu’s left hand swiftly moved. In a flash, he seized the seventh string with his thumb while his right hand continued to play the melody of the <<Three Variations at Yangguan>>, creating a wondrous sound. His left hand relaxed all of a sudden, and the seven thin rays of hybrid red-yellow light emerged, floating in the air. The vigorously profound zither music was not piercing, however, as the Thundering Spring Zither produced beautifully light notes.

Compared to the speed of sound, the hybrid red-yellow light’s speed was much faster. The radiance flashed by as the <<Three Variations at Yangguan>> came to a screeching stop in an indiscernible moment.

The six mages from the Wavast Kingdom stood lifeless, including Lu Fei Te. Everyone was motionless.

Di Ya La and the two Yellow Rank mages behind him immediately became clear-headed when the zither music disappeared. Behind Yin Zhu, Zi was also sluggish like the mages from Wavast Kingdom, but his eyes were focused on Yin Zhu’s body, not on the destination of the hybrid red-yellow light.

A silver light flashed, and the Thundering Spring Zither already returned to the space ring. Yin Zhu patted his body for dust as he stood up. Talking to himself vexedly, “I still cannot emit seven blades simultaneously as I continue playing the zither song. No wonder Grandfather Qin told me that my maturity is still lacking and deficient.”

“They... what’s wrong with them?” Di Ya La uneasily asked.

“Dead,” Yin Zhu said this earth-shattering fact dully. “Grandfather Qin said that seven music blades should have struck each and every one of my opponents. That Indigo clothed man was difficult to deal with, but I am better than him when I use my music blade.”

Di Ya La looked at Lu Fei Te and the other five mages dumbstruck. He saw only a thin slice of blood across all six mages’ necks as well as Lu Fei Te’s magic staff which had fallen to the ground, split into two pieces. His eyes were wide, even in death he was still in disbelief of everything that happened.

.....

“This is wrong. The zither music should have instantly ejected a sound wave blended with dou qi, making a blade of music. You were going too fast, you see. You are messing up at the 160th zither string.”

“The is too slow; dou qi and the sound wave did not fuse together, completely without any power at all .”

“Grandfather Qin, when will I succeed?”

“When? Only when, as you play the zither, you are able to produce and control the music blades incessantly as you please. Regarding your success, you are still lacking. Continue practicing; remember to lift the bottom finger.....”

.....

“Who is Grandfather Di Ya La?” Yin Zhu appeared to have not even been slightly affected by the scene. He did not even pay attention to Lu Fei Te and those mages still standing there.

Actually, Lu Fei Te was exceptionally strong, but he carelessly saw Yin Zhu as

only a Red Rank. They did not even have the time to summon their familiars and magic scrolls under the influence of the zither magic and was killed by Yin Zhu in an instant.

Di Ya La's voice trembled. Now that he saw Yin Zhu's crystal clear black eyes, he couldn't help but feel frightened. "I, I am he. Your Grandfather Qin instructed me to give you this." While speaking, he groped around his chest for a Red Rank mage emblem and handed it over to Yin Zhu.

Yin Zhu took the emblem enthusiastically. He saw that naturally, it was a red Six-Star emblem with an engraving of a zither on top. Magic faintly fluctuated, frantically changing directions, atop the emblem.

"Ah, this is what Grandfather Qin asked you to give to me! Then I'll take my leave. Thank you, Grandfather Di Ya La," saying this, Yin Zhu and Zi walked out.

"Ah! Praise Blue Dias, wait a moment." Di Ya La in a great rush shouted Yin Zhu to stop.

Yin Zhu turned around, inquisitively asking, "Is there another matter?"

Di Ya La muttered, "Your Grandfather Qin told me to give you that mage emblem and arrange for someone to guide you to Milan. Furthermore, I am supposed to instruct you on some general knowledge about the continent."

Chapter 4 – Zi’s Power (I)

To the side, Zi’s heart skipped a beat. Qin Shang really did not feel at ease with Yin Zhu journeying alone. Seeing Yin Zhu open his mouth, Zi rushed to say, “I think it is unnecessary. Yin Zhu and myself will be more than enough. Let’s go.” His head didn’t even turn around as he dragged Yin Zhu with him and left the Magic Guild.

Di Ya La wanted to stop them, but he had seen Zi’s eyes flash with a cold light. Closing his mouth, he turned around to look at the six standing corpses. He sullenly said, “What’s to be done? What should I do? The Wavast emissaries died here.....”

Pi’er Luo pulled Di Ya La to the side and said in a low voice, “Vice-President, people should not see anything when they come here; even if someone investigates, we cannot confess! It’s best if you handle this immediately, and then report to the president so he can make a decision.”

Di Ya La hesitantly said, “You mean, to burn and destroy the corpses?”

Pi’er Luo looked at Lu Fei Te’s corpse with disgust and hatefully said, “They were already damned. I just didn’t expect the president’s disciple to be so strong. His strength is apparently merely a Red Rank! It’s hard to imagine.”

Di Ya La had practiced magic for many years. He gradually calmed down and said, “Well now, this matter cannot be leaked, especially pertaining to the child. You should forget everything you saw. Let them handle it. Do clean this up a bit.”

Pi’er Luo’s eyes flashed with an icy brilliance. “Destroy and burn the corpses? This is the expertise of us Fire mages.”

Yin Zhu was unaware of how much trouble the magic guild was in as he walked the streets of Luna City. He faced Zi, who was by his side, “Zi, I just killed someone; was I right to do that?”

Zi’s gaze gentled as he looked at Yin Zhu, nodded seriously, and said, “It is only natural to eliminate enemies, otherwise you will give yourself numerous inconveniences. The best method is to destroy the enemy. You were exceptional

today.”

Yin Zhu was like a blank piece of paper and smiled admiringly at Zi. His earlier hesitation completely disappeared. He smiled and said, “That’s good. In the future, I will kill my enemies. But Zi, Grandfather Qin asked the magic guild to instruct me on general knowledge about the continent. Walking away like this, this is not good!”

Zi stopped walking and sternly said, “Yin Zhu, do you trust me?”

Yin Zhu nodded without even a bit of hesitation and said, “Naturally, I trust you. You are my best friend.”

Zi smiled. “Thus, I will teach you everything about the continent. We will need to go buy things first, and then we will set off.”

Yin Zhu couldn’t help but feel warm in his head when he looked at Zi’s smile. Without thinking, he followed him with complete faith. Unfortunately, Grandfather Qin and Grandfather Li absolutely did not expect he would reject the guidance and kill people before even leaving for Milan. They obviously did not plan for this to happen.

Zi led Yin Zhu in their walk to a family store and stopped in front of it. “Yin Zhu, do you have money?”

Yin Zhu nodded and materialized a gold coin in a silvery flash of light. “Grandfather gave me what seems like hundreds of these gold coins. Is this what you want?”

Zi nodded, took the gold coin Yin Zhu proffered, and led Yin Zhu into the store.

The store echoed with an unceasing sound of tinkling bells with their entrance. A middle-aged man was inside with a lazy appearance. He stood up upon seeing Zi enter. “What do you want?”

Yin Zhu curiously looked around and saw all kinds of weaponry and armor hanging on the walls. He had never seen these things before and couldn’t help but ask Zi, “What are these?”

Zi replied, “These are the armor warriors wear and the weapons they use.”

Yin Zhu said, “Do we need these? They look nice, you want these?”

Zi nodded and told the middle-aged man, “Give me a large two-handed heavy sword.”

The middle-aged man lazily inquired, “There are many kinds of big two-handed heavy swords, which kind do you want? You can choose from my right — these weapons made here are well-known throughout Arcadia.”

Zi impatiently exclaimed, “Nonsense, why does the kind matter? As long as its weight is heavy; the heavier the better.”

Zi’s rude words angered the middle-aged man. He saw Zi’s powerful build, however, and didn’t dare to question him. With a gloomy heart, he replied, “You want heavy? Well, I’ll give you heavy.

“Follow me.” As he said this, the middle-aged man turned around and walked further inside.

Yin Zhu and Zi followed him inside and saw a few men dripping with sweat as they casted and molded weapons. Arcadia was already hot enough; the addition of the stove made it boiling. Yin Zhu and Zi were not affected by the heat as they walked inside, unlike the constantly perspiring middle-aged man.

The middle-aged man pointed his finger to a corner and explained, “This is the heaviest two-handed heavy sword. If you can lift it, I’ll sell it to you.” His face displayed a trace of oppressiveness as he said this.

In the corner was a black object. In all honestly, it absolutely could not be considered a sword. It was more like an iron stick. It was approximately two meters long with one end thick, while the other end was thin and slender by several times. The thin end was as wide as an adult’s arm while the thick end was the size of a human head. It was also severely layered with dust.

“This is the two-handed sword you spoke about?” Yin Zhu angrily asked. Although this was the first time he left the Desolate Jade Sea, he clearly knew what kind of sword this was.

The middle-aged man said, “This is a special sword. Did you not want a heavy sword? In here, this is the heaviest. As long as you can lift it, I will gift it to you.” As he said this, the teasing in his eyes became more evident.

Zi’s gaze was serene, but Yin Zhu could faintly sense that Zi’s current mood

was not at all pleasant. Zi stepped forward and gripped the iron stick by its thin end, the handle, and began to use all of his power. His mouth couldn't help but issue a light gasp of surprise, his eyes displaying amazement. The corners of his mouth held a trace of a smile as he picked up the two meter iron stick. "Good."

The middle-aged man saw Zi effortlessly pick up the iron stick, and his eyes nearly fell out of their sockets. No one had ever been able to lift this iron stick since its weight was too heavy. The iron stick was inadvertently found while extracting an iron mine. He knew the weight was nearly equal to ten iron ores, surpassing at least 500 kilograms. If not because of his greed thinking that it was made from a special metal, it was unlikely he would have even brought the iron stick back. Later, he was disappointed, as no matter the strength of the flame, having even paid handsomely for a Fire mage, the iron stick could not be melted down to be reforged. Over the years, the iron stick was overlooked and left in the forge. He could not believe that a person could easily lift this iron stick up without the use of dou qi. Moreover, this person before him looked very young.

"We are leaving." Zi simply said three words, walking out with Yin Zhu.

"Wait, wait a moment." The middle-aged man's voice came from behind them.

Zi knitted his brows and challenged, "Don't tell me that you are reneging on your word?"

Pertaining to the protagonist's kill, Little San is here to explain. First of all, Ye Yin Zhu did not receive a lot of instruction about the outside world during his childhood. It is possible to say that he did not understand the implications of killing someone. In his pure heart, there were only two types of people: good and bad. At the same time, he killed them with his music blade in the blink of an eye, that was all. It appeared that the motionless mages just died, nothing more. Furthermore, the scene has no cruelty. Therefore, why should he believe it was a frightening matter? From another perspective, Ye Yin Zhu faced against the strength of an Indigo Rank mage, one whose true magical strength surpasses him. Against such tremendous pressure, he could only employ his strongest attack against the enemy. Because of the nature of his particular magic, it succeeded on the first attempt. Frankly, he should be glad he defeated his

formidable opponent. His tranquility and newborn innocence and purity gave him a gentle mentality. As a Divine Music mage, under any circumstances, the most important thing was that he preserved the purity of his heart in any situation.

At this point of writing, Little San has carefully considered this question. Although the protagonist left Desolate Jade Sea as a pure youth, Little San did not want to depict him as weak. Cultivating Bamboo Dou Qi required resembling the bamboo's lofty and unyielding character. Confront an enemy ruthlessly, that was the Bamboo Sect's objective. Everybody please continue to read on, it will only become more and more exciting and interesting.

It was only killing someone, that was all. This is, after all, a xuanhuan novel. In the future, it is likely that large battle scenes will appear. Don't tell me that Ye Yin Zhu using zither magic to kill opponents at a higher level than himself in a single swing, killing for the first time, is bad?

In addition, Zi's influence on Yin Zhu was rather large. You'll see that Zi explains the morality of the kill to Yin Zhu. The more innocent a man, the easier it was to disregard the consequences.

At this point, Little San would like to say, the protagonist won't be held responsible for his act of killing. Consider this a little spoiler, it's basically where the monk can run away, but the temple won't run with him. The Arcadian Magic Guild is out of luck, or more like the kingdom of Arcadia. Simply to say, this is a small foreshadowing.

Friends, don't force all the hints out from Little San. Hehe. Everyone has a lot to look forward to. Little San absolutely guarantees more marvelous scenes. Furthermore, speaking in passing, this novel of Little San does not have a manuscript, and Little San has been working hard on writing. In order to write it better, Little San slowed down the writing speed. However, new chapters aren't delayed. This only requires Little San to devote more time to writing it. I hope friends can understand and don't rush Little San.

Chapter 4 – Zi's Strength (II)

The middle-aged man promptly waved his hand, alarmed, and cried, “No, no, I’m merely asking whether you desire armor? We can discuss a good price.” He was not an idiot. To the contrary, as a merchant he was exceptionally shrewd. Because Zi was able to effortlessly pick up the heavy iron stick, he could already see that Zi and Yin Zhu were absolutely not ordinary people. As a weapon-dealing merchant, meeting such a powerful warrior was a happy occasion. His lazy expression vanished, desiring to sell some armor next.

Zi coldly replied, “I do not need armor.” Saying his piece, he and Yin Zhu left together.

With Zi leading, the two of them once again went to purchase some daily essentials in Luna City, left the capital city of Arcadia, and followed the main road to the north.

.....

Desolate Jade Sea.

“Father, I am worried about Yin Zhu. That child has never left home before. Shouldn’t we secretly follow him? We should at least send him off to school personally,” Mei Ying apprehensively said.

Ye Li slightly smiled and proudly exclaimed, “My Ye family’s descendents naturally possess a strong ability to adapt. Besides, he has the letter from your Uncle Qin and will have a mage from the magic guild to accompany him. Nothing will happen.”

Mei Ying was still worried, “I am afraid that Yin Zhu, this child, won’t get along with people. If he suffers in school, what should we do?”

To the side, Qin Shang smiled and said, “Do you still not understand Yin Zhu’s strength? Besides, the Divine Music chairmen at Milan’s Institution of Magic and Martial Arts is my friend. Furthermore, he has my recommendation letter. Yin Zhu is unlikely to have any trouble. He has cultivated his Pure Zither Heart for years. It is time for him to leave and fight his own battles. Only in this way will he be able to mature. I just don’t know what my old friend will think when he is introduced to such a young teacher. Can you imagine their reaction? Hahahaha.”

.....

“Zi, you are so awesome!” Walking down the main road, Yin Zhu curiously looked around at the scenery while talking to Zi.

The heavy black iron stick rested on his shoulder as Zi asked, “How am I awesome?”

Yin Zhu said, “You bought so many things, as if you were familiar with the outside world. But I remember you coming to the Desolate Jade Sea when you were small and apparently never leaving after.”

Zi’s eyes flashed with a cold light and indifferently responded, “That is a matter of the past, Yin Zhu. I’ll explain more later.”

“When is later?”

“When you actually mature.”

The kingdom of Arcadia was really pitiful; in comparison, it was less than a third of the kingdom of Wavast. Luna City was quite close to the northern part of the kingdom. The two of them, after ten days of walking, had already reached the borders of the Wavast Kingdom.

After entering Wavast, the air became very cool and refreshing. Comparing Wavast Kingdom to Arcadia, the two felt completely different. Its roads were twice the width of Arcadia’s and filled with numerous pedestrians. Not only that, the majority of them rode gnus.

Gnus were rank 1 magical beasts and were named as such because of the two horns atop their head as well as their robust bodies. Even as a rank 1 magical beast, they were the most inferior existences as they had no attack power. It did, however, have exceptional endurance and was the best civilian transportation tool. In Arcadia, only the wealthy had the ability to possess gnus.

“Zi, we also need to buy gnu to ride. How much does a gnu cost?” Yin Zhu looked at the pedestrians riding gnus and couldn’t help but have an envious look. After all, he still had a childish temperament and was easily tempted by new things.

Zi thoughtfully said, “Good idea, this way we could move a bit faster. If we go on foot, we wouldn’t be able to reach Milan within two months. Approximately 15 kilometers ahead is the most southern city of Wavast, the Rolle City. We can

go buy ourselves a gnu there.”

“A gnu?”

“En. One gnu is enough. I do not need one. I do not need a gnu as I run just as fast as one.” Zi looked and smiled at Yin Zhu. His smile would only emerge in front of Yin Zhu. To outsiders, he would always have an ice cold appearance.

“I do not believe that, let’s race,” Yin Zhu laughed.

Zi glanced at him, “Let’s start.” His body was already lunging forward as he spoke, his inhuman speed not the slightest bit affected by his tall body and the heavy iron stick.

“Ah! You are shameless.” Ye Yin Zhu stared at Zi who was already beginning to run. Hastily, he began running as well. Pushing off the ground with his foot, he swiftly chased after Zi.

Zi sprinted steadily. Each big step powerfully carried his body forward. Yin Zhu was unusually agile as well, barely touching the ground. The gap between each step exceeded five meters, and extremely quickly, with several leaps, he had reached Zi’s side.

“Zi, I am faster than you,” Yin Zhu said with pride.

Zi sent him a strange look, “Are you?” He stomped a foot against the ground, and Yin Zhu suddenly felt the earth beneath him tremble. He saw that Zi had caused the tremble with his stomp. The next moment, Zi’s body catapulted forward like an arrow. This time, the jump covered close to 20 meters. It was so explosive that he already left Yin Zhu behind.

Yin Zhu didn’t sense dou qi and felt alarmed in his heart. Although he was akin to a blank, white piece of paper, he was still extremely intelligent. He knew that relying only on physical strength to produce this fast speed was absolutely impossible. ‘Zi, how many secrets do you have?’ he thought. He quickly accelerated forward to catch up.

All of a sudden, there was the deafening sound of hooves up ahead, just in front of Yin Zhu and Zi’s path. In the distance, a large dust cloud rose up, resembling a long earth dragon as it approached them at lightning-speed. Furthermore, some pedestrians on the road begun to act strangely. Currently,

each and every one of them were about to lose their heads out of fright as they dodged to the side of the road. As the “earth dragon” got closer, a cry of alarm sounded.

It was a squadron of approximately a hundred calvarymen, all wearing heavy black armor and with four meter long lances in their hands and a large, heavy iron shield tied to their saddle. As they pressed forward, the imposing aura caused the pedestrians to shrink back in fear. They didn't ride gnus, but rank 3 magical armored beasts. They looked similar to gnus but were hornless and plated with a layer of keratin armor. Extremely heavy and powerful, it was the best beast for the common cavalry to ride on the continent. Throughout the continent, heavy cavalry were the main combat force for war, but expensive to create. Arcadia's heavy cavalry, when summed up, only amounted to a squadron of ten thousand personnel, nothing more.

The combined weight of the armored beasts and the heavy cavalry, when added up, was absolutely terrible. This cavalry force basically ignored the pedestrians on the public road.

Zi and Yin Zhu, dashing forward, stopped almost simultaneously. The armored beasts and heavy cavalry increasingly advanced closer, but they did not dodge to either sides of the road. Yin Zhu was curious about the armored beasts and heavy cavalry, while Zi simply did not have the two words ‘make way’ in his vocabulary.

“Fuck off.” Shouting out loud explosively, the head of the heavy cavalry was surprised to see two individuals on the road not evading.

Zi didn't move, but his gaze was ice-cold and serene. Yin Zhu also stayed still because Zi did so. He said that he would protect Zi so he subconsciously stepped forward, shielding Zi with his body. He didn't even ask Zi why he didn't move.

The armored heavy cavalrymen's eyes appeared to exude malevolent rays of light. Since they failed to move, they could just go to hell! In the Wavast Kingdom, the heavy cavalry was the privileged military branch. During the execution of a order, interfering civilians could be killed without them being convicted. Thus, they basically had no conscience obstructing them.

Closer, increasingly closer. Soon, the armored heavy cavalry arrived in front of

the two of them. The front row of five heavy cavalrymen harshly, and unreasonably, raised their spears. Without the slightest doubt, before their eyes, the rough heavy cavalrymen’s spears would easily run through the bodies of the two civilians.

“Roar ~” The cruel bellow was similar to God’s thunderous fury. As Yin Zhu’s body was light, he actually flew high when he was thrown up. Underneath, the scenery gradually became smaller. Soon, he began to see a strange scene.

Chapter 4 – Zi’s Strength (III)



Zi raised his head to the sky and roared, causing the powerful heavy cavalry that had been steadily advancing to almost instantly change. All of the armored beasts in the front had, at almost the same time, forced the humans riding them to an abrupt and screeching stop. Due to the powerfully fast momentum, the armored beasts in the rear collided with those in front. The sound of heavy cavalry armor clashing against each other repeatedly resounded. In addition, the spears of the cavalrymen pierced through each other’s bodies and was accompanied by blood-curdling screams. The previously imposing and threatening squadron of a hundred men on the heavy armored beasts had unexpectedly fell into chaos in a split second.

Ye Yin Zhu firmly believed that he would never be able to forget Zi’s appearance when he roared. That violent mood, bloodthirsty aura, and ice-cold expression — everything deeply branded itself into the deepest parts of his mind.

The heavy cavalrymen were shocked, not knowing what happened. They merely felt a deafening bellow internally, making it seem as if their hearts had wanted to leap into their throats while their eyes desired to jump out of their sockets. And now, those following their expedition of war armored beast unexpectedly stumbled around, trembling at the scene. Some of their mouths and noses even frothed and foamed, spraying out.

“Fuck off.” Zi growled. At this moment, Yin Zhu fell from the sky and landed right behind him.

Zi's speed was not quick, but each step forward projected upon people a rock-solid and unyielding feeling. Most of the armored beasts in front of him were already lying weakly upon the ground. Looking on as this violet-haired young man approached closer, the cavalymen subconsciously pointed their spears in Zi's direction.

Zi moved, his movements nimble and simple. He swept the two meter long black-iron stick out, causing the five cavalymen and their spears to almost instantly and explosively fly and fall into a pipeline ten meters away. Unexpectedly, the cavalymen's fine steel spears had already been bent to resemble snakes.

Zi had already begun walking in front of the now riderless armored beasts and, with an equally simple motion, swept with his right foot. The armored beast, weighing more than 200 kilograms, flew away, cries of lamentation one after another echoing out. In the same move, the five armored beasts were completely kicked to the side, clearing Zi's path significantly.

Other than the heavy cavalryman who were injured in the previous exchange, were at this moment crawling out from under the armored beast. The cavalryman felt no dou qi during Zi's assault, and yet he had this tyrannical strength, which made their courage run entirely cold. The five armored cavalymen had explosively flown out in one strike. The once fierce armored beasts unexpectedly resembled rice straw as they were sent flying, not even daring to resist in the slightest. What frightening strength!

"Get lost." Zi growled once again. This time, the heavy cavalymen did not even dare to issue an attack again. In front of this absolutely terrifying power, they silently separated and yielded the road. They even worked together and used all of their strength to drag the paralyzed armored beasts lying on the ground to the side.

Zi strode forward with his head held high, basically not catching sight of the flickering, shining, sunlit cavalymen's spears on either side. Yin Zhu inquisitively stared at Zi's body in front of him. Immediately afterwards, he followed and began walking together with him. This was the first time he saw Zi use his combat force. He didn't think Zi's strength would be so powerful, not to mention that it was only his raw physical strength.

No one dared to obstruct them; even the bystanders who saw this scene did not dare to breathe loudly. When Zi's and Yin Zhu's silhouettes disappeared at the end of the road, those armored beasts gradually regained the ability to move.

One of the five heavy cavalymen, previously sent flying explosively by the iron stick, had an inch-long fracture in his right hand. Their mounts, the armored beasts, could not even get up, their fragmented visceral organs spewing out of their mouths.

"Zi, you're a warrior?" Yin Zhu asked.

"Essentially." The irritation in Zi's eyes had already disappeared completely, turning tranquil once again.

"Zi, why did you do that just a moment ago?"

Zi glanced up at the dark blue sky and indifferently said, "Because there is no magical beast that can make me yield, not even a dragon."

Yin Zhu looked at Zi deeply. "Zi, you know? Just a moment ago, you gave me a very powerful feeling, but I don't sense the origin of your power. Can you use dou qi?"

"Not at all. Because I don't need to." Zi sent Yin Zhu a glance and suddenly displayed a trace of a smile. "Will you still protect me?"

Yin Zhu smiled, "Of course. For as long as you want, I will forever stand in front of you to protect you. Although next time, don't throw me so high."

Rolle City was a bustling, small town. To say the least, the people living here had a busy appearance, not resembling the laziness of Arcadia. The cool and refreshing air brought an invigorating feeling to people. This was a much more suitable temperature for living.

The handsome Ye Yin Zhu and steadfast Zi garnered the attention of the people bustling around, especially those young girls. Some of them were even daring enough to throw coquettish glances. Naturally, Zi's ice-cold appearance and Yin Zhu's frequently reciprocated smiles, handsome and gentle, made it easy for those young girls yearning for love to pay attention. If those young girls knew what Yin Zhu was thinking in his heart, regretfully, their hearts would be

indifferent and nonchalant.

“Zi, why do we look different from those girls and women? Their pectoral muscles are so robust!” Yin Zhu somewhat enviously inquired.

Zi’s face stiffened for a split second before he softly questioned, “Your parents haven’t told you?”

Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “You were with me for the longest time in the Desolate Jade Sea. You saw that, till the end, whenever we were together my parents didn’t tell me anything about the outside world in order to not influence the cultivation of my Pure Zither Heart. Do you know why a girl’s pectoral muscles are more robust than ours?”

Zi helplessly looked at Yin Zhu, “I don’t know.”

“As it turns out, you also don’t know. It is a pity that I have no female friends to ask. Zi, let’s go buy a gnu. Now, are we standing here or continuing on our journey?”

Yin Zhu asked this when suddenly, Zi’s complexion greatly changed. As he was very close to Zi, Yin Zhu could sense Zi’s muscles instantly tense, a strange aura beginning to emanate from his body. Yin Zhu was unclear of what this wrathful feeling was; however, it seemed very agitated.

Following Zi’s gaze, a nearby delegation of ten people ahead of them was walking over. Zi watched them attentively. One of them had his whole head covered with golden colored hair, a gloomy appearance, and a stature somewhat taller than Zi. His whole body was brimming with a wild aura, his clothed muscles full of explosive strength. He had high cheekbones and unusually thick facial hair. With a single glance, it was easy to see the difference between this man and an ordinary person. The others he was with were dissimilar to ordinary people as well. Yin Zhu even saw a person in the rear with a long tail. The pedestrians on the street saw these people and subconsciously stayed out of their way, apparently terrified.

“Zi, what’s going on? Who are those people?” Yin Zhu asked.

“They are beastmen from the Northern Wastelands. They are led by a beastman of the Royal Family, the Lion Tribe,” Zi gloomily said.

“Beastmen? What are beastmen? Are they people?”

Chapter 4 – Zi’s Strength (IV)

“I don’t know how the beastmen came to be, but they can be said to be a hybrid of man and beast. There are some that are even purely bestial. Throughout the continent, beastmen are the closest race to magical beasts. Their disposition makes them suitable for war as they possess extremely powerful strength. Because they are not good at magic, the three great human kingdoms have suppressed them constantly, lest they invade the humans inland. Now they can only live in the bitterly cold Northern Wasteland. Since the Northern Wasteland borders the three great wealthy kingdoms, there has not been even a decade of peace between them. The beast races could only trade their few Northern Wasteland specialities in exchange for some food and daily necessities with human countries. I didn’t expect them to come to southern Wavast.” As he spoke, Zi exuded a contemplative appearance.

As far as Yin Zhu was concerned, the beastmen were novel as he had not seen a race like this before. He couldn’t help but send over numerous curious glances. This time, the lionman’s gaze darted over to them at that moment and swept over Yin Zhu’s body as well as Zi’s. When he saw Zi, instantly, his golden hair rose up. With a greatly ominous glint in his eyes, he strode over to Zi and Yin Zhu.

A faint green layer of dou qi circulated in between the golden hair all around his body. It was just that the dou qi radiance was awfully insipid, indiscernible without careful examination. However, only mages who trained their spiritual magic power like Yin Zhu could easily sense it.

Zi suddenly raised his head and met the lionman’s eyes. The lionman’s steps suddenly stopped. Looking at Zi’s ice-cold eyes, he nodded slowly. He turned around immediately, returning back to his troop.

Yin Zhu did not know what happened so he merely looked at Zi and then the lionman. Zi sighed and bowed his head to Yin Zhu. He said, “I’m sorry, Yin Zhu, I’m afraid I cannot accompany you to Milan.”

“Eh?” Yin Zhu exclaimed with great alarm. “Zi, for what reason? Didn’t you

promise.....”

Zi lifted his hand to grasp Yin Zhu’s shoulder. He smiled bitterly as he said, “I’m sorry. I promised to accompany you, but I currently have something I must take care of. The map you received is good; follow the path the map points out, and you’ll reach the Milan Institution of Magic and Martial Arts. If you don’t know the route, try to find someone to ask. Once I handle this affair, I will come and find you at the school.”

Yin Zhu received the map that Zi handed over. In an instant, his heart brimmed with the feeling of disappointment. For ten years, he had not been separated from Zi. Now Zi suddenly said that he had to leave. With a firm expression in his eyes, Yin Zhu’s heart stopped being sorrowful as he completely emptied the emotions in his heart, even as he lost his most important person.

“Zi, you apparently have many secrets, but unexpectedly haven’t told me any. If you need my help, shouldn’t you tell me? I am your brother!” Yin Zhu impatiently said.

“Brothers.” Zi’s eyes burned scorchingly bright. He clapped Yin Zhu’s shoulder, hard. “That’s right, we are good brothers. Yin Zhu, you head on to the institution of magic and martial arts first. It is unlikely for me to take long. I will find you; this is my promise to you. Remember, on the road, you must not wantonly trust people. At the same time, you must conceal your strength as much as possible. Never let a stranger know the true extent of your strength. This is the only way for you to protect yourself better. Do you understand? Take this, use it when you need to do something and do not want anyone to know.. Just a moment ago, we were on the road and had a conflict with the Wavast heavy cavalry. In order to avoid trouble, you should leave here as quickly as possible.” While he spoke, Zi withdrew a object from bosom and handed it to Yin Zhu. Not turning his head back, he advanced in the direction the lionman from earlier had disappeared to.

Only after Zi completely disappeared did Yin Zhu regain his vision. Although Rolle City’s city streets were lively, his heart felt kind of lonely. In addition to being lonely, he felt helpless. From now on, he was on his own.

Finally looking down at the object Zi gave, he did not know what materials the mask was made of. Feeling it, it was unusually soft. Carefully, he stored it in his

bosom as he walked down the road with a gloomy heart. 'Zi, you should have come to me earlier! Now I truly can only rely on myself. First, buy a gnu. Then, go to the Milan Institution of Magic and Martial Arts as quickly as possible to wait for Zi.'

As he thought about his plans, the helplessness and loneliness gradually disappeared. He asked someone on the street and found out that gnus were being sold at the slave market near the north gate. With a lively step, he walked in that direction. Zi told him that on the continent, gold was the most common national currency. 1 gold coin was equivalent to a 100 silver coins. Generally, people only used silver coinage as currency because a family household's living expenses for a month would amount to only a dozen or so silver coins, that was all. Buying a gnu should only cost, at most, a few gold coins.

Throughout the continent, almost every human town had a slave market as it was absolutely essential. The social class system was extremely rigid, and the slave market dealt with human trafficking from the lowest classes. But as the continent developed, the operating slave markets expanded and began selling all the races and magical beasts on the continent. Naturally, the only magical beasts sold were of low rank, nothing surpassing rank 3.

On the continent, there were ten ranks of magical beasts. The first three ranks that were rank 3 or lower were comprised of rudimentary magical beasts. Rank 4 to rank 6 consisted of advanced magical beasts. Ranks surpassing rank 6 had magicals beasts called sentient magical beasts. Rudimentary magical beasts, generally speaking, were docile. Even if they were ill-tempered, their destructive power was not very large compared to advanced magical beasts, who became quite terrifying, and sentient magical beasts, rank 7 to rank 10, who became extremely horrifying existences. Rank 10 magical beasts were also called mythological beasts as they existed only in legends.

The two most powerful magical beast races were the Behemoth family of the Northern Wastelands and the dragon race secretly surviving in the eight human countries. Genuine dragons and genuine behemoths are extremely rare. So much so that throughout the continent's history, there has never been more than a thousand at any point in time.. Their strength, however, was extremely formidable. If it was a genuine dragon or behemoth, even if they were the

weakest, they were still Rank 7 or higher. However, the dragon race had an advantage over the behemoths, as they had comparatively a lot more next of kin than the behemoths, this is closely related to the innate promiscuous nature of the dragon race.. After a thousand years of evolution, the genuine dragon race is rather sparse while the different variation of dragons were numerous.

Eventually, humans were able to successfully tame some of these variations of dragons, becoming what was known as a domesticated dragon. Although they cannot compare to the genuine dragon race, they still possessed dragon blood. Even the dragon variations with the most diluted blood had at the very least the strength of rank 3 or higher while the purer bloodlines could even be compared to a genuine dragon. By having these dragons, it made the human empires extremely powerful. This allowed them to suppress the beastmen of the Northern Wastelands and prevented them from leaving the bitter cold land. Naturally, humans could not invade the Northern Wastelands as the environment was not suitable for human survival.

“I’m so pitiful! My mother died when I was 3 years old and my father left me when I was ten.. Lords, ladies, please take pity on me. Bestow a few gold coins so that I can eat a meal.”

With great difficulty, Yin Zhu found the entrance to the slave market. Having just arrived, he caught sight of the beggar who sat and bawled by the slave market entrance. The little beggar had a small build, his upper and lower body adorned in tattered clothing. With messy hair and a dirty face, black dirt already completely covered his face and clothes except for a part of the cloth with a hole. Set up in front of him was a broken bowl. He sat there crying to the heavens, pleading to passing strangers.

Chapter 5 – The Price of Kindness (I)

There tended to be only two types of people who passed through the front gate of the slave market: those who sell, and those who buy. Naturally, those who sold were merchants and poor families who couldn't do anything but sell their own children. Those who bought were high-ranking nobility. No matter their status, it was difficult was any of them to be in a charitable mood. Merchants were highly interested in profit and would probably not take notice of a beggar. The poor had trouble sustaining themselves, let alone others. As for those aristocrats, they were more anxious about the beggar dirtying their gorgeous clothes. Thus, this beggar was obviously not sensible when he chose to come here to beg. If his body was strong he might have been sold as a slave, but he was very small and had a filthy body. In the eyes of those dedicated merchants, he was not even worth bath water.

As this was the first time he saw a beggar, the simple Yin Zhu thought to himself in his heart, 'Looking at his appearance, he appears to be around my age, yet he is so small. His mother died when he was 3 and his father abandoned him when he was 10 years old. This is such a pitiful encounter!' His feeling of pity rose involuntarily as he walked up and stopped in front of the beggar.

The little beggar looked up to see someone had stopped in front of him and stopped, His eyes immediately brightening. "Sir, is sir looking to bestow coins to me?"

"For you." Yin Zhu withdrew from his bosom all of the gold coins he was planning use to buy a gnu, which appeared to be approximately 30 gold coins. Cupping his hands together, he placed it all into the outstretched hands of the little beggar.

The little beggar was expressionless; he looked into Yin Zhu's flawless, crystal-clear eyes, not knowing what to say. Deep within his heart, his heartstrings trembled furiously. He would have been joyous at getting only one gold coin.

"Thank you, thank you kind sir." Hands trembling, he was almost in panic as he

quickly stuffed the gold coins into his bosom with lightning speed. It was so fast that Yin Zhu was startled.

“Get up, the ground is cold.” Speaking to the side, Yin Zhu, despite the hand being dirty, pulled his hands. He felt that the pair of hands were quite soft. They were small, but the fingers were unusually slender.

Now, the little beggar lowered his head just in time to see, in a flash of sunlight, Yin Zhu’s space ring shimmer and sparkle. His slender and nimble hands suddenly trembled as Yin Zhu pulled him up to stand. He gratefully said, “Sir, thank you. You are indeed a good person.” He abruptly stood up which caused his body to lean into Yin Zhu’s slightly. He gripped Yin Zhu’s hand to steady himself and, in that moment, his fine slender hands secretly moved.

Yin Zhu smiled as gentle and kindhearted as an angel. His heart felt comfortable as he thought to himself, ‘Helping others feels so good.’ “Goodbye,” waving to the little beggar, he walked into the slave market.

The little beggar’s eyes displayed an internal struggle as he watched Yin Zhu walk away and disappear. Gritting his teeth, he quickly turned around and walked in the opposite direction. In the blink of an eye, he disappeared into a crowd of people.

The slave market was divided into seven districts. The outermost district sold inferior, ordinary civilians. Here, even if a robust person greatly exerted himself, he would be worth at most 50 gold coins and nothing more. The next district sold rudimentary magical beasts. After that, the deeper into the five districts the more expensive the items became. Naturally, as Rolle City was a small town, they did not have many highly precious items for sale. Only the major cities’ slave markets could sell genuinely good items such as dragons or beautiful female elves.

Yin Zhu entered the slave market. The first thing he felt was that it was noisy; all kinds of voices continuously echoed in his ears. It was a large place. For a moment, since he completely lacked experience, he didn’t know where to go to buy a gnu. Hastily walking to a passing middle-aged man, he asked, “Hello, uncle, may I ask where the gnus are sold?”

The middle-aged man appeared to be around 40 years old. His body was

clothed in exquisite black leather armor. Imprinted on the left side of his chest was an emblem of a double-edged sword overlapping a shield atop a twisting design of thorns and thistles. He was as tall as Zi, and on his back was a long 1.5 meter double-handed sword.

“You want to buy a gnu? I was going there myself. I’ll take you,” The middle-aged man said straightforwardly.

“Fantastic! Thank you, great uncle.” Yin Zhu very courteously expressed thanks to the middle-aged man. The many years of playing the zither imperceptibly influenced his graceful temperament. In addition, with his handsome appearance, it was easy for him to give people a favorable impression.

The middle-aged man led Yin Zhu towards the slave market. Walking to the side. He asked, “Little brother, I am called Ge En. What is your name? Where do you come from?”

“I am called Ye Yin Zhu. I come from Arcadia.”

“Your name is unusual. Oh, we are finally here.” As he spoke, Ge En pointed his finger to a gigantic stable.

Walking up to the horse stable, a fishy smell assailed his nostrils, and Yin Zhu couldn’t refrain from furrowing his brows. He was accustomed to the fresh and clean air of the Desolate Jade Sea. This kind of foul environment felt very uncomfortable. The stable’s interior contained approximately 10 gnus. The gnu dealer was just discussing the prices with some customers.

Ge En was apparently quite familiar with this kind of environment. “Rolle City’s slave market is just like this. If you go to a major city’s slave market in the future, you’ll see a ultra-large horse stable with first-rate gnus. There would be several hundred for selection.”

The gnu dealer seemingly recognized Ge En and walked over to welcome the man. “Oh, is this not regiment commander Ge En? How have you been? New gnu have arrived, select a few.”

Ge En groaned, saying, “Ha Te, what rank are your gnus? I still don’t know. All right, choose for me and give me 20 strong ones. Oh, right, allow my little brother to choose one as well.”

Ha Te hastily smiled and promised, going to pick the gnus with lightning-speed. After a short period of time, 21 gnus were pulled up. Ge En was evidently an old customer of his as he did not go and carefully select the gnus. Withdrawing his purse from his bosom, “Old standards, five gold for two gnus. This is 50 gold coins, you can count.”

Ha Te took the purse, easily putting it away into his chest. Smiling, he said, “Why count? Don’t tell me I can no longer trust you? You are a member of the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company, the only permanent mercenary force in this city.”

Ge En bitterly laughed and said, “You think I like being stationed in this ghost area? Lacking strength, it’s basically impossible for me to be stationed at those major cities. Very well. This little brother I brought with me, give me face and provide him a cheaper price. Two gold is good. Little brother, pick from these 21 gnus. Although not the highest quality gnu, Ha Te’s gnus have very good endurance.”

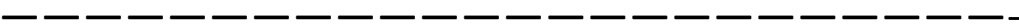
Yin Zhu naturally arrived to the conclusion that Ge En’s price was very favorable. “Thank you, Great Uncle Ge En.” As he had given all of the gold coins he had carried to the little beggar, he subconsciously sent spiritual force to his space ring to withdraw money. His face stiffened instantly.

Extending his hands, he saw his eight fingers devoid of anything. Only a pale mark remained on the finger that held his space ring.

“AH! My space ring is gone,” Yin Zhu cried out in alarm. Panic suddenly attacked his heart; the space ring itself was exceptionally precious. But he could say that the ring was even more precious as it held the five zithers! Furthermore, the ring had the recommendation letter from Qin Shang as well as the rest of his gold coins inside. Now, losing the ring, he was immediately impoverished.

“Little brother, are you.....” Ge En was suddenly startled by Yin Zhu’s outburst.

Yin Zhu didn’t reply. His crystal clear black eyes flashed with a cold glint. Closing his eyes, he quietly released faint red rays of light between his eyebrows. The red rays of light formed a six pointed star in front of him.



Chapter 5 – The Price of Kindness (II)

A space ring’s master had a spiritual connection to it, and only the master was able to open the sealed ring. Forcefully opening the ring would only damage it. ‘The lost ring is explainable,’ now that Yin Zhu thought about it, recalling when he helped support the little beggar as he got up. The little beggar had grabbed his attention and could easily have pawed his space ring.

After leaving Desolate Jade Sea, anger had appeared in Yin Zhu’s mind for the first time. He gave charity with kindness, yet he had his most valued possession stolen. He was an acclaimed zither mage! Without his zither, he was basically unable to use any zither magic. In addition, those five zithers were the Zither Sect’s most treasured assets. They had accompanied him for 16 years; losing them like this, how could he not be anxious?

At this moment, in an uninhabited nook of Rolle City, the little beggar examined the sealed case in his hands. He mumbled to himself, “This is unexpectedly a space ring. What a pity, I am unable to take anything out of it. Forget about it, I’ll just keep it as a souvenir. In this troubled world, such a simple good man is rare; this could teach him a lesson. Anyway, so what if it is a space ring. Humph. Humph. I have it in a lead case to disrupt the the spirit wave connection. 10 gold coins is sufficient for my travel expenses and tuition fee. Oh, father— No, old man, just you wait. Inevitably there will be a day where I can get back what I deserve.” His eyes were big and bright, but it did not have the crystal clarity of Yin Zhu’s eyes. In his eyes was a light brimming with hatred and all sorts of complicated negative emotions.

He held the ring case tightly as a faint green light flashed by. His delicate figure rapidly disappeared out of sight.

“Oh no, no connection.” Withdrawing his spiritual force, Yin Zhu’s complexion had already paled.

What did losing the space ring signify? It meant he had lost the Zither Sect’s most treasured assets, all of his money, and his recommendation letter to Milan Institution. “Nothing, what should I do? What exactly should I do?” ‘I am in Wavast without any way out of this dilemma. Should I continue on to Milan? I no

longer have the money to travel, nor the recommendation letter. Return? Likewise, I don't have the money to travel back. And after losing those five ranked zithers, how could I face my teacher, Qin Shang?'

Ge En and Ha Te, these two men, did not ridicule Yin Zhu for failing to procure gold coins. On the contrary, both of their faces exuded awe.

Ge En probingly asked, "Little brother, are you alright?"

Ye Yin Zhu vexedly said, "Great Uncle, I fear I am unable to purchase a gnu; my space ring is lost with all of my money inside."

Ge En nodded, saying, "Little brother, looking at your appearance just now, you ought to be an advanced level red ranked mage."

Ye Yin Zhu immediately recalled Qin Shang's warning and subconsciously nodded, "Yes!"

Ge En's eyes displayed a trace of happiness as he continued to question him, "Do you have someplace you want to go?"

Ye Yin Zhu hesitated. Thinking to himself in his heart, he certainly did not want to return. He absolutely could not return and face Qin Shang before he retrieved the space ring. It was still better to head to Milan first, as Zi said he would try to find him there. He would see Zi again and consult with him about what he should do.

"I want to head to the Milan Empire's Milan Institution of Magic and Martial Arts."

"Fantastic, that is indeed fantastic. The Milan Institution of Magic and Martial Arts is located outside the Milan Empire's capital city. Our mercenary company's next mission is similarly heading to Milan city. It would be better if you follow us. If you journey with our mercenary company until we reach the final destination, I will pay you 20 gold coins. What do you think?" Ge En excitedly stated.

The sudden loss of everything had been a shock, so Ge En's proposal to Ye Yin Zhu ignited hope in his heart once more. However, all of this came at him too suddenly. He couldn't help but be somewhat dazed.

Ge En believed that he had offered Yin Zhu too little money and hastily added,

“We would also produce the money for your gnu. What’s wrong? Do you not like it?”

“No, no, of course I am willing. But, uncle Ge En, you did not tell me what a mercenary is?”

“Eh.....” Ge En did not know whether to laugh or cry as he looked at Yin Zhu. In front of him, this handsome young man looked at them seriously. He did not seem like he was joking.

“You don’t know what a mercenary is? Come, I’ll tell you.” To the side, Ha Te explained, “On this continent, mercenaries are considered to be a very broad profession. This is purely because of the benefits. They engage in combat for their employers or execute warrior missions. In every place, you can find mercenaries. In addition, the Western continent’s Palermo Kingdom is called the mercenary kingdom because, on the continent, the greatest number of mercenary companies are stationed within its borders. In that place, a mercenary’s treatment and status is the highest.”

“So it’s like that. Uncle Ge En, you’re allowing me to become a mercenary?” Ye Yin Zhu asked.

Ge En nodded and said, “You’ll be considered a temporary mercenary. To be honest, our Iron Brambles Mercenary Company truly has not employed a mage’s power in a long time. We are escorting a Lord’s goods to Milan City next. The journey should be basic, nothing dangerous. Granted, we would lend a hand to each other either way. What do you think?”

The haze in Yin Zhu’s heart that was produced from the lost of his space ring had disappeared as he looked at Ge En’s sincere eyes. “Uncle Ge En, you are indeed a good person. I am certainly willing.” Currently, he had already forgotten about the little beggar stealing his ring as he spoke to this good person.

“Good, let’s go. Ha Te, have your men deliver these gnu to us later like in the past, or to the old location.” Ge En’s mood was clearly pretty good. He drew Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder to face the slave market and walked outside.

Looking at their backs, Ha Te smiled and said, “Ge En’s luck is really not bad. I did not expect such an undemanding mage. The Iron Brambles finally has a mage. Although only temporary, they can now be promoted.

Ye Yin Zhu did not know, that on the continent, a mage's status was higher than he had imagined. It was the highest and most noble profession. Even a red rank mage's position was higher than their warrior counterpart. In addition, all mages were always very prideful. Precious few were willing to work with mercenaries. The great majority vowed loyalty and devotion to their kingdom. Mages were a significant indicator of a mercenary company's strength and the hiring price exceedingly high if present.

Mercenary companies were divided into eight ranks. In order from highest to lowest they were: S, A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. At the E, F, and G ranks, they were called low order mercenary companies. For the C and D rank, they are called middle order mercenary companies. B ranks were called high order mercenary companies while those at the S and A rank were called supreme order mercenary companies. Currently, the Iron Brambles mercenary company was an E rank mercenary company running missions sufficiently. They wished to advance to the D rank, but they needed a mage for the mercenary guild's audit. This was the main reason as to why Ge En agreed to employ Yin Zhu for their next, not at all dangerous, mission.

The Iron Brambles Mercenary Company was stationed in the middle of Rolle City's courtyard. All of the men, including Ge En, totaled up to 67 members. 20 swordsmen, 10 archers, 10 light cavalrymen, and the remaining 27 shield warriors made up a relatively complete mercenary company. A mercenary company for six years, the great majority of the mercenaries were within the ages of 25 and 40. Ge En was a green rank Earth Warrior. Because of him, the Iron Brambles rose to an E rank mercenary company in five years. His objective was to ascend to the D rank. Entering that rank of mercenary companies, the commission for employment would be substantially higher.

Chapter 5 – The Price of Kindness (IV)

“Hello, I welcome you as a new member to this mission’s team. May I be so bold as to ask, are you really only a Red Rank mage?”

Yin Zhu nodded and replied, “Yes! Advanced level Red Rank.” Perhaps because he had to lie, his face immediately flushed red.

An Ya did not point out his peculiarity. Instead she smiled and said, “It’s always a pleasure to have such a formidable mage join us.”

Ge En said, “Praise Blue Dias. Miss An Ya, we are nearly done with preparations. Tomorrow at dawn, we can definitely set off on time.”

An Ya smiled and nodded, “I’m relieved. You are busy right now, I will meet you early tomorrow morning at the city gate.” Finished speaking, she gracefully turned around and left.

“Praise Blue Dias, she finally left.” Ge En subconsciously wiped sweat off his brow.

Yin Zhu curiously asked, “Uncle Ge En, are you terrified of elder sister An Ya?”

Ge En elaborated, “No, I am not terrified. For some unknown reason, when I’m in front of her, I always feel shameful. She is the most beautiful and noble woman I have ever seen. In all honesty, I even told her I am unable to produce any obscene thoughts of her.”

“Obscene thoughts? What are those?”

“This one....., you’ll understand in the future.”

Yin Zhu’s gaze continued to rest on the city gate. “Uncle Ge En, elder sister An Ya is also a mage.”

“Eh?” Ge En flinched in fright. He stared at Yin Zhu in shock and said, “She can’t be. She’s only a merchant, nothing more.”

Yin Zhu earnestly countered, “She is definitely a mage. Just now, she used spiritual power to test me; It’s unlikely for me to be wrong.”

Ge En's eyes displayed a pondering light. His mind clearly did not resemble his rough appearance. "No wonder she could come out by herself to Rolle City from such a distant region to purchase tea leaves. As it turns out, she is actually a noble mage. Yin Zhu, did you see what rank she was? Stronger than you?"

Yin Zhu shook his head and said, "I couldn't make out her rank, but I am sure it is higher than mine."

"So theoretically, she might be an Orange Rank mage." Ge En's heart was gloomy as he sighed. Fortunately, he did not have any wicked desires towards this female boss. Offending a mage was not sensible. He didn't know, however, that Yin Zhu's magic capability was technically Advanced level Yellow Rank. In addition, An Ya was obviously not just a simple Orange Rank.

Stemming from his respect towards mages, Ge En arranged a single, unshared room for Yin Zhu to rest in. Sitting on the bed, Yin Zhu distressingly reflected. He had already probed out his spiritual power several times in an attempt to connect with his space ring, but he failed. And he had a feeling that the space ring seemed to be getting farther and farther away from him.

"Why? Why did you steal my ring when I had already given you gold? Without my zithers....." Yin Zhu discovered a suddenly vicious longing for his zithers. For 16 years, he had spent almost every day together with his zithers. The zither had long ago become his best companion. Having now lost his zithers, the loss made him feel depressed.

Sitting cross-legged with a straight back to obtain a tranquil heart, Yin Zhu had no other alternative but to practice his Bamboo Dou Qi. Yellow rays of light quietly emitted from his body, enveloping his body in dou qi to form a protective shield. His dou qi continuously circulated through his meridians, the fresh, gentle feeling finally easing Yin Zhu's restlessness and worry as it sent him into a trance.

Bamboo Dou Qi was subdivided into three layers: Cyan Bamboo, Yellow Bamboo, and Violet Bamboo. Yin Zhu also practiced zither magic equally, its differing color gradation distinct from the Rainbow Ranking System. Each layer had nine levels. Currently his body emitted a faint yellow radiance, indicating that he was at the first level of the Yellow Bamboo layer. Considering his rank, his dou qi was of higher rank than his zither magic. According to the Rainbow

Ranking system used throughout the continent, he would be considered a primary level Green Rank, thus an Earth warrior. It was just that he primarily used dou qi as a supplement for his zither magic.

Early in the morning, as the first ray of sunlight illuminated everything on earth, Rolle City was already bustling with activity at the north gate. All 68 members of the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company were ready for departure. There were three carriages; the carriages at the front and back of the company carrying goods while the middle carriage carried their employer, An Ya. 20 of the most robust mercenaries and swordsmen guarded the three carriages with archers following closely by their side and 27 spear and shield warriors at the periphery. 10 light cavalymen opened up the path ahead. The 20 purchased gnu, except for those burdened with the group's baggage, pulled the carriages. Everything was arranged neat and orderly.

As Ye Yin Zhu was a mage, he was stationed in the middle alongside the carriage, riding a gnu for the first time and feeling both excitement and panic simultaneously. The ride on the gnu was shaky, but the naturally mild magic beast was easily tamed. He rapidly became accustomed to riding the beast. After all, his body was far from resembling his seemingly thin and weak appearance.

At this moment, Yin Zhu stared straight ahead, his gaze brimming with envy and astonishment as he looked at the procession in front of him which was being led by the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company's boss, Ge En. Ge En was not a simple Earth warrior. Rather, he was an Earth knight and rode a tamed dragon. The rank 4 green ridgeback earth dragon had a length of five meters and a height of 2 meters. With relatively small forelegs, it completely relied on its two thick, solid hind legs to support the body which appeared to be dark green. In addition to its strong concussive force, this rank 4 tamed dragon also had excellent defensive ability and could spray an acidic, corrosive liquid. Although the tamed dragon was classified as rudimentary, in comparison to the other rudimentary magic beasts, it was several times stronger. It possessed primary level Green Rank strength, so Ge En must also be Green Rank to contend against it. This tamed dragon was the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company's treasure; at that time, Ge En expended a lot of mental and physical effort to obtain it.

All of the mercenaries wore leather armor, so their advancement speed was

not slow at all. Before noon, they had already advanced quite a distance away from Rolle City, gradually heading in the direction of the Wavast Kingdom. Speed was their most important objective. With each advancing hour, Ge En would issue an order to rest for a while. When the sun hung suspended in the middle of the sky, they simply ate some rations before immediately continuing the journey.

“Yin Zhu.” The carriage’s hanging curtain stirred, revealing An Ya’s moving face.

“Elder sister An Ya, is something the matter?” Ye Yin Zhu politely greeted the beautiful, aristocratic business owner.

An Ya smiled and said, “You are a mage, so why do you bother to ride the beast? It is inferior to riding a carriage. Come, take a seat. Looking at your appearance, this must be the first time you are riding a gnu. I’m afraid that after a long time this would become unbearable to you as we must hurry to arrive at Milan within a month’s time.”

“Good!” Yin Zhu delightedly exclaimed. He immediately jumped down from the gnu to enter the carriage.

Chapter 6 – The Dragon Cavalry (I)

Ye Yin Zhu did not know what courtesy was, nor did he understand the relationship between employer and mercenary. The true essence of the Pure Zither Heart was experience and talent. After riding a gnu for half a day, the novelty wore off. It began to feel dry and dull some time ago, and Yin Zhu couldn't stand it. The Iron Brambles Mercenaries executed the mission very seriously and rarely talked.

The carriage interior was quite spacious. Since An Ya was the only occupant, it appeared absolutely empty. Inside the carriage was a diverse arrangement of food and beverages. The seats were wide and padded with thick cushions that were very comfortable to sit on even after being on horseback.

An Ya wore a long, white skirt just like before and leaned on the cushion, her figure exuding a languid feeling. Taking a seat opposite of her, Yin Zhu couldn't help but breathe in deeply when a fresh and clean aura emerged from across his seat. The refreshing aroma made him feel very comfortable. He sincerely expressed, "Elder sister An Ya, you are truly beautiful."

An Ya listened to the praise, but the words from the innocent Yin Zhu's mouth sounded like it only had one type of meaning. She smiled and said, "Yin Zhu, why did you join the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company?"

Yin Zhu did not cover up the truth, so he retold the events that occurred yesterday once more. However, he remembered Zi's repeated warnings and refrained from mentioning the five zithers that were inside his space ring.

"So as it turns out, it is like that. You really are an extremely kindhearted person, Yin Zhu. Actually, in this world, sometimes people cannot be too kindhearted, or they will be bullied."

Listening to An Ya's console, Yin Zhu couldn't help but recall that vile, small beggar and hatefully said, "Next time, it will absolutely not happen." He simply could not express the full extent of his anger.

An Ya shot a glance at the mage emblem on Yin Zhu's chest. Ge En and the mercenaries were not familiar with magic, so they did not know what to look out

for. But why could she not identify Yin Zhu's peculiar mage emblem? "Yin Zhu, the design of your mage emblem is strange. What is your mage specialization?"

"I am a Divine Music mage. My emblem is engraved with the design of my musical instrument."

"Eh? Divine Music?" An Ya was speechless and stared at Yin Zhu. Her eyes instantly became strange.

"What's the matter? Elder sister An Ya, why is this strange?"

"Ah, it's nothing. I was simply baffled that a boy would choose the Divine Music mage profession. I know few Divine Music mages, and all of them have been females only. So explain, why do you not have your own magic beast?"

Yin Zhu replied, "Do mages definitely require magic beasts?"

The surprise in An Ya's eyes quietly disappeared. "Of course. Magic beasts guarantee the best safety for mages. A mage without a magic beast is not very safe. After all, it is a mistake for a mage to be in close proximity to fight. As the most expensive profession on the continent, mages receive the highest respect due to their rarity, even more so if they are strong. It is not as obvious at the primary level, but once you enter the Yellow Rank, a mage could effortlessly deal with several warriors of equivalent rank. As well as insuring a mage's safety, magic beasts could also serve as a shield for mages, warding off an enemy's assault long enough for their master to finish casting magic. A powerful magic beast could also collaborate with the mage to attack the enemy. A mage with a magic beast has the strongest combat capabilities. Don't tell me that you didn't know this fact?"

"Grandfather also seemed to mention this, but he said that I still didn't have the fortunate timing to possess a magic beast." Qin Shang wholeheartedly invested himself into cultivating Yin Zhu's Pure Zither Heart, so ordinarily he seldom talked about matters apart from the zither.

An Ya exclaimed, "That grandfather of yours must certainly be a powerful mage. A mage has only one opportunity to sign a contract with a magic beast in his lifetime. He must want you to be formidably strong and in the future sign a contract with a powerful magic beast. Unfortunately, you are a Divine Music mage." Yin Zhu clearly perceived her gaze to him softening even more as she

explained this. An Ya's gaze towards him somewhat resembled his mother's.

"Elder sister, you told me this narrative about magic beast, but you don't have your own magic beast?"

An Ya slightly smiled and said, "Naturally, I do have one. Otherwise, how could I have dared to travel to this region on my lonesome. A magic beast is a mage's best partner. Generally speaking, mages will sign contracts with magic beasts with strong attack and defense. This is to maximize their protection. Among them, avian magic beasts are the most precious because they are capable of gaining mages more time for casting. A mage and magic beast will establish a master-slave contract. In that case, till the end of his life, the magic beast cannot betray his master. The mage also must not renounce his magic beast. Thus, the single opportunity to sign a contract becomes exceedingly valuable. Yin Zhu, I heard on the road earlier today from Ge En that you want to head to Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts to study there. You call me elder sister, so I cannot be silly. If you want, elder sister would like to give you a magic beast?"

Listening to An Ya's proposal, Yin Zhu instantly appeared excited, but the excitement in his eyes swiftly disappeared. He shook his head and declined, "Elder sister An Ya, thank you for your kindness. However, Grandfather Qin said I cannot accept anything from strangers."

"You already call me elder sister, but I'm still a stranger? Elder sister is giving you a present, it is only natural for you to accept." Looking at the handsome and pure Yin Zhu, An Ya's favorable impression of him increased. The reason why she wanted to gift Yin Zhu a magic beast was mainly because of his vocation as a Divine Music mage. As a Divine Music mage, the spirit was connected to auxiliary, and their attack power was always neglected. The most important thing to do first was to sign a contract with a magic beast by ambushing and defeating one. If only individual power was relied on, a Divine Music mage would have a difficult time obtaining a magic beast contract. Acting on her favorable impression of Yin Zhu, she wanted to gift him a magic beast so that he had some power to protect himself. This way, her pure-natured little brother would be able to avoid being bullied at Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.

"I really can?"

“Of course. However, elder sister needs think of a good magic beast to give to you. After all, you only have one chance throughout your whole life. In the event that a growth-type magic beast suits you best, wait until after reaching Milan; I will help you look for one.”

Ye Yin Zhu did not know that An Ya was de-emphasizing the significance of growth-type magic beasts. Even though rank 7 or higher sentient magic beasts existed, growth-type magic beasts were extremely rare. In addition, any growth-type sentient magic beast in marketplaces had sky-high prices; there was not even a market price. Not to mention, getting a sentient magic beast to surrender was easier said than done.

“Elder sister, is it okay if I see your magic beast?” Yin Zhu’s eyes were brimming with hope as he looked at An Ya.

An Ya smiled and shook her head. She said, “Not here. Maybe after we go to a place where no one can speak of it. Yi, Yin Zhu, your hands.....”

Yin Zhu extended his hands towards An Ya, “I was naturally born like this. Grandfather said that being born with eight fingers allows me to play the zither without interferences. Ah! Elder sister An Ya, what mage rank are you? Yesterday, when you tested me, I sensed the water element in your body fluctuate intensely.”

An Ya was surprised. “You can sense the fluctuations of the water element in my body?”

Yin Zhu nodded and exclaimed, “Yes!”

An Ya asked seriously, “Yin Zhu, are you really only a Divine Music mage? Why is your spiritual power so acute?”

Yin Zhu scratched his head, and at a loss, he said, “I also don’t know. I’m just describing what I sensed.”

An Ya lightly sighed and said, “You are a foolish little boy. In the future, you cannot ask this same question to other people. Mages, for the most part, have bad tempers and are very peculiar; it’s likely to arouse others’ taboos.”

ZE Chapter 6.2

Chapter 6 – The Dragon Cavalry (II)

“Ah, not at all! Elder sister An Ya, your temperament is quite good. Oh, right! Elder sister An Ya, why are women’s pectoral muscles more developed than men’s?” Yin Zhu’s gaze naturally settled on An Ya’s chest.

An Ya was startled by Yin Zhu’s sudden question. When she saw his attentive, scorching gaze, her chest suddenly grew numb. Throughout her whole life, he was the first man to dare to ask her such a blatant question, yet Yin Zhu’s eyes did not hold a trace of obscenity.

“You....., go home and ask your mother.” An Ya, somewhat flustered, protected her bosom with her hands. Her charming face flushed pink, and she appeared bright, alluring, and exceedingly captivating.

“Ah! Previously, I didn’t have the opportunity to ask. Besides, grandfather only allowed me to learn the zither. Apart from that, I could not ask about any other matter. Elder sister An Ya, your face is rather red. Are you feeling unwell?”

“You....., You are truly a helpless little demon.” An Ya sighed, forlorn. If someone else asked this, she was afraid she would have already flared up. “In the future, you cannot ask the same question to any other female. A man and woman’s physiologies are different. Once you grow up, this will naturally become clear. Staring attentively at a woman’s chest, however, is not very courteous.”

“Oh. Ah, it’s like this! Elder sister An Ya, you are truly good to me. It’s unfortunate that I lost my zither, otherwise, I surely would have played a zither song for you to listen to.” Yin Zhu appeared to have realized something.

In accordance with Ge En’s prediction, the company had not met with any danger on their journey from Wavast Kingdom to Milan Empire. By following the main road for twenty days, they had already arrived at the border of the two countries. On the road, Yin Zhu and An Ya spent the majority of their time together, causing the mercenaries to be endlessly envious. Yin Zhu smiled as An

Ya told him entertaining anecdotes about the continent. An Ya taught him general knowledge, something that he, after spending over 10 years in the Desolate Jade Sea, still necessitated. An Ya was not only as gentle as a river, she was also very patient in order to teach him enough general knowledge so that he would no longer have the issue of resembling an idiot like before.

“We will enter the borders of Milan once we cross over the mountain up ahead. As we head north, we should reach Milan City in approximately 10 more days on the road” An Ya stood by the carriage as she spoke to Yin Zhu who was at her side.

The Iron Brambles mercenaries, apart from being responsible for sentry duty, rested in the shade of a tree on the wayside. Ge En heard An Ya, laughed, and said, “Milan Empire, compared to Wavast Kingdom, is peaceful. After we cross this mountain, the mission can be considered to be, for the most part, complete.”

“Yi, what’s that sound?” Yin Zhu’s expression shifted as he listened attentively.

Ge En asked, surprised, “What sound? I don’t hear anything. Could it be that you have better hearing than me?”

An Ya’s appearance became somewhat imposing. “Indeed, there was a sound, but it is from a fairly distance region. Although I didn’t hear it, the ground had a slight vibration.” As she said this, she glanced at Yin Zhu and thought to herself, ‘His hearing is unexpectedly better than mine. Is this the superiority of a Divine Music mage?’ Interacting for over 20 days, Yin Zhu gave An Ya the impression of being a pure, flawless blank paper with a simple character and boundless curiosity. His accidental discharge of spiritual force was not something a Red Rank mage could accomplish, but his spiritual force’s coloration was, as it turned out, red. Imperceptibly, this simple, handsome young man was, to her, an enigma. Even if Yin Zhu seemed simple, whenever she asked him about his origins, he would fall silent.

The sound gradually increased in volume until even the mercenaries could clearly hear it. The rumbling sound, which brimmed with oppressive force, came from their lateral side. An enormous earth dragon soared and rose, somewhat resembling the one Yin Zhu and Zi had met when they came across the heavy

cavalry the other day. Except, the heavy cavalry's dragon was incapable of being comparable to this imposing manner.

"Assume formation!" Although he did not know what was coming, Ge En still immediately issued this command, shouting loudly. He gathered his subordinates. The experienced mercenaries swiftly assumed a battle formation, spear and shield warriors at the head followed by swordsmen and archers at the rear. Ten light cavalry warriors were divided into two squadrons to protect both sides with the three carriages and Yin Zhu arranged at the back. Ge En stood in front of the formation, both hands drawing a large double-edged sword from his shoulder. He looked pensively in the direction of the earth dragon, his green ridgeback dragon unceasingly issued low snarls. It appeared somewhat restless as viscous, corrosive liquid dripped from the corner of the mouth and fell to the ground with a *pu pusound*.

Bright sunshine illuminated the distant place and made the earth dragon more visible, the rumbling sound it made caused the earth to violently tremble.

"Ah! It's the Imperial Cavalry. Quickly, sheath your weapons," Ge En panickedly shouted. Acting in a flurry, the swordsmen hid their swords behind their backs. The other members of the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company made similar motions. They appeared to have come across something dreadful, yet their alarmed expressions also contained some respect as well as admiration and envy.

What was the Dragon Cavalry? Using dragons as cavalry mounts, it was known as the Dragon Cavalry. The effect of a soaring earth dragon was created by this kind of cavalry squadron. Approximately a hundred men in number, situated at the front was an immense golden dragon that surpassed ten meters in length and four meters in height with its gigantic body. Ge En's green ridgeback earth dragon appeared tiny compared to it. This gigantic, golden dragon was wingless, but its four limbs touched the ground. The head appearing somewhat pointed and had a meter long horn extending from it that flickered with a golden, crystal-like brilliance. From a distance its thick scales were visible from a distance as it was very densely superimposed on its huge body; it had a very long tail with triangle shape spikes all along the tail. The tail's tip was bifurcated into three and slightly curved upwards without touching the ground at all. It gleamed with an

indigo, gem-like luster.

Behind the gigantic, golden dragon were uniformly cyan colored dragons. They were two meters tall and three meters long, with semi-erect forms and saddle-like seats fastened to their back for the cavalymen to sit in. Although they only had two legs to run on, their speed was very quick. They followed behind the gigantic, golden dragon the entire time.

“It’s a Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon and Earthbound Swift Dragons,” An Ya unenthusiastically stated. Facing the vast influence of the imperial cavalry, she did not even have the slightest amount of panic in her expression. Similarly, Yin Zhu was also unalarmed as he watched the large group of tamed dragons with only curiosity in his eyes.

“Elder sister An Ya, what are the ranks of those dragons?”

“The Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon is considered to be a tamed dragon that is incomparably strong; its strength is comparable with a genuine dragon, though naturally a rudimentary one. It is the King of Earth Dragons. A rank 6 magic beast, metal class, second only to sentient magic beasts, its defensive power is extremely powerful. In addition, its metal class innate magic allows it to run rampant on earth. You see, its horn and tail are the places where it releases its innate magic. As for the Earthbound Swift Dragon, they are inconsequential. A rudimentary dragon subdivided varyingly at rank 4 and 5; the larger swift builds are rank 5, while the somewhat lacking ones are rank 4. Speaking of its strength, it’s about the same as Boss Ge En’s green ridgeback earth dragon. In addition, it belongs to the earth dragon type. Its main characteristic is its swiftness. Its short distance speed is such that even a Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon cannot compare with it.”

Chapter 6 – The Dragon Cavalry (III)

As An Ya spoke, the dragon cavalry moved closer to them. They had evidently discovered the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company’s presence as well, their speed gradually slowing to a halt. At this closer proximity, Yin Zhu could see that a man around 30 years of age sat atop the head of the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon. Beside his leg hung a seven meter long, heavy dragonspear. Suspended from his waist was a simple, double-edged longsword. His silver armor shone in the sunlight, flickering and shining. The man wore no helmet, his long golden hair elegantly cascading down his back. He was tall with an upright posture. While he had an ordinary appearance, on his left cheek was a scar, five inches long extending from the corner of his eye to his chin, which gave him a fierce aura. On the left side of the silver chestplate was a palm-sized, silver six-pointed star engraved on top of a design of violets which bore his family’s insignia.

Facing the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon’s oppressive atmosphere, Ge En trembled from his seat atop his roaring, green ridgeback earth dragon.

“Praise Blue Dias. Hello, esteemed Dragon Cavalry Commander. I am honored to meet you here.” Ge En hastily jumped down from his green ridgeback earth dragon’s back. He pressed his right hand to the left side of his chest in deference to the Dragon Cavalry Commander atop the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon, as etiquette required.

The Dragon Cavalry Commander merely glanced at him and coldly replied, “Praise Blue Dias. What are your origins?” Behind his back, the dragon cavalry already uniformly stopped without even the slightest noisy sound, demonstrating the quality of these troops.

Ge En, not desiring to anger his cold counterpart even the slightest, quickly answered, “E Rank Iron Brambles Mercenary Company; we are just executing an escort mission.”

The Dragon Cavalry Commander lifted his hand and pointed, “My partner is hungry. Yield five gnus to serve as rations. Here are 20 gold coins as your

compensation.” As he spoke, he unceremoniously flung out a purse. At this moment, he was only 20 paces away from Ge En, but the purse had already arrived in front of Ge En who automatically tried to receive it. The purse arrived with great force, causing him to stagger a step and nearly fall to the ground.

“Uncle, be careful.” Yin Zhu emerged from the back and steadied Ge En’s body; he did not want Ge En to lose face here.

The Dragon Cavalry Commander threw the purse without even sparing Ge En a glance. He lightly slapped the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon’s thick back in a doting manner, making it clear that the dragon was the partner that he mentioned earlier.

Anger flashed through Ge En’s eyes, but he truly did not dare to offend the Dragon Cavalry Commander before him; however, the gnus were just enough for his company to use. If he relinquished 5 of them, his mercenary company would have nowhere to place the heavy baggage.

“Why do you need so many? Why must we give you our gnus for your earth dragon to eat?” Ge En was horrified to discover that Ye Yin Zhu had appeared before him unknowingly, his clear beautiful voice somewhat full of anger.

The Dragon Cavalry Commander wrinkled his brow, lifting his eyes to look at Yin Zhu who was also staring back at him. Although the Dragon Cavalry Commander looked down at him condescendingly, Yin Zhu’s vision did not cower even the slightest amount, his crystal-clear black eyes expressing his stubbornness.

“Mage?” The Dragon Cavalry Commander’s voice eased somewhat. A mage was equivalent to a noble even if the emblem on Ye Yin Zhu’s chest indicated he was only Red Rank.

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, “Our gnus are not for sale, we are still in need of them.”

Ge En quickly reacted at this moment, rushed over, and hurriedly pulled Yin Zhu behind him. He was very familiar with the dragon cavalry’s arrogance and strength and feared the worst for Yin Zhu. “Excuse me, Great Dragon Cavalry Commander, we truly do not have a surplus of gnus you see.”

A cold light flashed through the Dragon Cavalry Commander's eyes. He was already beginning to feel impatient. "If you can block my spear, you may leave. If not, leave behind the gnus."

"Why are you such a tyrant." Yin Zhu raised his head and glowered at the Dragon Cavalry Commander.

The Dragon Cavalry Commander indifferently said one word, "Strength." He was right; on this continent, strength decided everything.

"Oh! It's a great honor! Viscount Ao Si Ding, long time no see. How about you let me block the dragonspear instead?" An Ya graceful voice echoed from behind Yin Zhu and Ge En. Hearing this voice, the Dragon Cavalry Commander Ao Si Ding's whole body immediately trembled. At first, he didn't look clearly at Yin Zhu's party, but his vision immediately changed once he examined them.

A light sound emerged from his mouth, and then Ao Si Ding's body, in a flash, jumped down from the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's back. "Praise Blue Dias. Miss An Ya, as it turns out this is your procession." While he spoke, he pressed his right hand to the silver star on the left side of his chest, a chivalrous action of a higher standard than Ge En's.

"Praise Blue Dias." An Ya lifted her right hand, allowing Ao Si Ding to kiss it to finish the rite.

The Iron Brambles mercenaries were taken aback by the Dragon Cavalry Commander's abrupt change in mannerism. They didn't expect the Dragon Cavalry Commander to have this kind of attitude and respect when he faced their employer.

"Miss An Ya, what are you doing here?"

An Ya unenthusiastically replied, "I came to Wavast to purchase goods and have employed the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company to escort me back. I didn't expect to meet Viscount here. Aren't you always located in Milan City?"

Ao Si Ding glanced at An Ya, an infatuated light flashing through his eyes, "I am escorting these military goods to Wavast. You are also aware that Wavast kingdom is our Milan Empire's trade partner. The mission is already complete, so I intended to return to Milan City. You are also returning, why not let us escort

you back? An E rank mercenary company is not worthy of your station.”

An Ya groaned and replied, “Forget about it. If your Dragon Cavalry leaves me alone, I would be satisfied. How could I dare inconvenience you.”

Ao Si Ding forced a smile and said, “It was my mistake, I really didn’t know that Miss was here. Miss, no matter how sharp my dragonspear is, it will never ever be pointed at you!”

An Ya serenely responded, “As this is the case, I request Viscount to continue on his way. In all likelihood, you still must return to Milan City to debrief.”

“Miss, do you really not need our escort?”

An Ya glanced at him and asked, “Do you think I need it?”

Ao Si Ding mockingly laughed at himself. “As this is the case, this Ao Si Ding will take his leave and wait for your return to Milan City where I will once again visit to apologize humbly.” He took a step backwards as he spoke. He then leapt and rose several meters high to land on the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon’s back. Before he left he intentionally glanced at Ye Yin Zhu. From the look in his eyes, Yin Zhu could see a trace of enmity.

The dragon cavalry’s speed quickened strangely, and in a blink of an eye they already disappeared from sight. It was just that this time Ao Si Ding and his dragon cavalry’s advancing pace was very light-footed and didn’t cause an excessive dust cloud to rise.

As he looked at the disappearing dragon cavalry’s back, Ge En walked up to An Ya’s side and nervously said, “Miss An Ya, I’m sorry…….”

An Ya slightly laughed, the ice-cold expression on her face already disappearing, “There is nothing to be sorry about. Even if an A rank mercenary company were to face the dragon cavalry, they would not have been as unyielding as you. After all, they are humanity’s ultimate armed forces. We should set off, Boss Ge En.” Finished speaking, she did not wait for Ge En’s response and returned to her carriage without noticing the reverence in the mercenaries’ eyes.

“Uncle, don’t be in a daze. We should leave,” Ye Yin Zhu said, patting Ge En’s shoulder.

“Ah!” Ge En finally reacted. In his heart, he thought to himself, ‘It seems that our employer’s identity is not ordinary. Nevertheless, I should not ask about it too much. One should not inquire on matters that one should not know in order to avoid unnecessary trouble. The person whom even the Dragon Cavalry Commander is respectful towards isn’t someone I could dare to offend. I should immediately complete this mission.’

“Yin Zhu, I am truly grateful for what you did just now.”

Chapter 6 – The Dragon Cavalry (IV)

Yin Zhu smiled and said, “What is there to be grateful for. I merely spoke what was on my mind, that’s all. This dragon cavalry is indeed tyrannical. Especially that Dragon Cavalry Commander, who tried to order us around. The Milan Dragon Cavalry located in the Wavast kingdom’s national capital is quite arrogant; when they are in the Milan Empire, I suppose they would even ask for the sky?”

Ge En sighed and said, “Younger brother, ah, I don’t even know what to say! The dragon cavalry’s status on the continent is second only to mages. A Dragon Cavalry Commander’s rank is even higher than that of mages; only the higher ranked mages can be said to be in the same social class as them. The strength of the dragon cavalry could be used as an official measure of a country’s strength. That hundred dragon cavalymen squadron earlier could even contend against a legion of ten thousand regular heavy cavalymen.”

Yin Zhu nodded and replied, “Earlier that Viscount was indeed quite strong, but are all the Dragon Cavalry Commanders that difficult to deal with?”

Ge En said, “He’s not really considered to be difficult to deal with. No matter what country, the dragon cavalry classification is the same. Ten people make up a small dragon cavalry squad, and a hundred people make up a medium-sized company. There is a thousand units to a regiment and ten thousand to an army. Do you know why, out of the 8 countries, only Milan and Blue Dias are considered empires while the other 6 are only kingdoms? It is because Milan and Blue Dias both possess a dragon cavalry army. Relatively speaking, the Milan Dragon Cavalry army is the strongest on the continent. Precisely because of their existence, the Northern Wasteland beastmen don’t dare to step beyond the determined boundary. That Ao Si Ding just now is a Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander. Under him is the Dragon Cavalry small team captain, and above him is the Dragon Cavalry Regiment Commander, the Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander, and the Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Army Commander. A Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander has Cyan Rank strength while a Gold Star Dragon

Cavalry Commander is at least a primary level Indigo Rank. A Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander is a Violet Rank War Master. It is said that the Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander rides a strong rank 9 gigantic dragon. Even a Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander rides a genuine dragon and not a tamed one. Within the Dragon Cavalry Army, the common dragon cavalryman needs to be of intermediate level Orange Rank strength or higher and must possess a tamed dragon as well. Furthermore, they must have a nobility title of knight or higher. Because of this extremely stringent selection, the ranked individuals were highly terrifying. Even if they are only common soldier without a rank, everyone, without exception, can be proud because they have entered the Dragon Cavalry Army. If I had this green ridgeback earth dragon 10 years ago, maybe I could have also become a Dragon Cavalry Army Soldier.”

“So it’s like this. Individual strength in addition to a dragon mount, no wonder the dragon cavalry can be so strong.” Yin Zhu pensively thought, ‘It’s a pity I’m a mage. If I could ride a gigantic dragon, it would feel amazing.’

After the earlier great wave passed through, the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company once again set off. In everyone’s mind, An Ya’s identity had become even more mysterious; it was unlikely she could continue to be considered as an ordinary employer.

The rest of the journey was smooth traveling. Ten days later, the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company finally escorted An Ya and her goods to Milan Empire’s capital, Milan City.

As they were about to enter the city, the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company, who were escorting the goods, was met by a reception of a dozen youths wearing black clothing. They did not know when An Ya had notified them, but these people were clearly her subordinates.

“Yin Zhu, are you really unable to play a song for your elder sister?” An Ya somewhat hopefully looked at Yin Zhu.

Yin Zhu shook his head and replied, “Can’t, I already promised Uncle Ge En that I would go with them and help upgrade their mercenary company to D rank. Anyway, the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts is right outside Milan City. In the future, if I get the opportunity, I will surely find you. Elder sister An

Ya, thank you for taking care of me this whole journey and for teaching me so many things.”

An Ya’s eyes revealed a faint trace of sadness. Looking at her, the black clothed subordinates’ hearts secretly felt surprised. They had never seen their beautiful boss display this kind of expression towards a member of the male sex.

“Oh well, forget it. Hold onto this. If you have time in the future, come to Milan City’s Floating Orchid Pavilion to find me. I’ll wait eagerly for the time when I could hear you play.” As she spoke, An Ya slid a blue crystal jade ring softly onto Yin Zhu’s middle finger on his left hand.

“Ah! Elder sister An Ya, this is extremely precious. I, I cannot accept.” The refined blue crystal ring had a silver-colored base, but he did not know what material was used to create it. The sapphire drop was set on top, radiating gently and slowly circulating blue light like rippling water without the slightest flaw. Even more precious was the magic fluctuating inside it. Yin Zhu had a revelation. Ah! This was a space ring! When the space ring was placed on his hand, his spiritual force had automatically linked with it. He was startled to discover that the space within the space ring was greater than his original one. In addition, inside the space ring was 500 gold coins.

“What did your elder sister tell you? This is merely elder sister’s small gift for you to remember her. Besides, you’ll visit Floating Orchid Pavilion to find me and will need to use it to see me. If you refuse to accept it, elder sister will get angry.” Although it was obvious she was deliberately assuming an angry appearance, An Ya’s trick to persuade Yin Zhu still made him uncomfortable.

Yin Zhu helplessly said, “Very well. I’ll accept this ring, but elder sister’s money I cannot use. Grandfather said, ‘A man must absolutely not take a woman’s money, otherwise he will come to live off a woman.’ I remember grandfather’s strict personality, elder sister, so I’m returning this money to you. This is the principle of the matter.” His voice was fairly loud, so everyone couldn’t help but look askance at him.

An Ya’s attractive face flushed. Fortunately, her heart was very firm otherwise it would be difficult to regulate her emotions. She whispered, “Little fool, do you not know what the phrase ‘live off a woman’ means? Wrong word choice. Plus, it

isn't easy to survive alone away from home; what will you do without money?"

Yin Zhu firmly shook his head and replied, "Elder sister, I really cannot. If you don't take back the gold coins, I will also reject the ring."

An Ya helplessly sighed. Her right hand swiped over Yin Zhu's, and in that same movement, her elegant, green crystal ring flashed. The 500 gold coins in Yin Zhu's sapphire ring disappeared. "Little fool, I must leave. Be careful with this ring; do not lose it like before. Oh. If you encounter something difficult, remember to find elder sister."

Ye Yin Zhu stopped at the roadside and watched as An Ya's carriage was gradually escorted far away by the black-clothed youths. An indescribable feeling of loss spontaneously arose, similar to what he felt when Zi originally left.

Milan Empire, one of the continent's largest human countries; to the north was the Northern Wasteland, to the west was the Ascoli kingdom, to the east was the Florence kingdom, and alongside the southwest border was the Palermo kingdom while Wavast kingdom was located on the southeast border. To the south, it bordered the continent's core area, Blue Dias. With four countries bordering it as well as the Northern Wasteland, it was destined to have a strong, heavy military. Otherwise, how could this country not collapse surrounded by this ring of enemies?

Milan City was an ancient, civilized city with close to six million permanent residents and was the political, cultural, and economic center of the Milan Empire. As the capital, it was Milan Empire's primary strategic town with a permanent force of 30,000, among this were three dragon cavalry regiments.

Ge En and Yin Zhu walked through the Milan City streets with Ge En pointing out the surrounding buildings. "Milan City has the reputation of being an aristocratic paradise. The buildings here are the continent's most illustrious artisans' crystallized wisdom. Here the wealthy can buy everything they fancy. Various kinds of money squandering establishments are everywhere. At the same time, Milan City is also the continent's safest town. One might as well ask, who would dare to commit a crime in a city with 3,000 dragon cavalry members defending it? This city is also very large; if you were to walk from the North City Wall to the South City Wall, it would take at least three days." He led the Iron

Brambles mercenaries to a cheap hotel. After all, upgrading their mercenary rank did not require everyone to come along. Yin Zhu's sole presence as a Red Rank mage was sufficient.

Chapter 7 – Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts (I)

On both sides of the street stood many kinds of tall buildings – the moment one subsided, the next one rose. A diversity in the pedestrians could also be clearly seen. Not only did Ye Yin Zhu see warriors, he also saw several mages. This kind of situation wasn't something that could even be sought in Arcadia or Wavast. It clearly indicated how prosperous and powerful Milan's strength was.

Inside Milan City, only nobility could ride magic beasts. As neither Ye Yin Zhu or Ge En possessed titles of nobility, they could only walk.

“Look, there's the Mercenary Guild.” Ge En's voice brimmed with excitement. To mercenaries, the Mercenary Guild was their holy land.

Ye Yin Zhu looked in the direction Ge En pointed at and saw a tall, imposing building at the end of the street. It was truly difficult to determine how big this huge domed building was just from looking at its front. However, just from its appearance, it was excessively large, being at least a hundred meters wide in the front and close to thirty meters high. ¹ Also located at the front was a huge perimeter wall circling the building. At the center of the building was an emblem: a gold shield overlapped with a pair of crossed double-edged swords. It flickered with a dazzling light as the sun shone down upon it. Even though the building was quite distant, the emblem was clearly visible.

As one walked within 500 meters of the Mercenary Guild, the surrounding crowd began to thicken. Many different kinds of mercenaries continuously traveled back and forth from the building. Ge En led Yin Zhu forward, breaking through the crowd with great difficulty to enter the Mercenary Guild. The pressure from the crowd actually increased instead of fading away as they passed through the entrance. At least a hundred staff members wearing black uniforms kept the interior of the guild orderly.

This was an extremely spacious hall, its height reaching 20 meters or more. Huge crystal windows on both sides of the hall allowed sunlight to enter. Apart from the one side with the entrance, the remaining three sides were lined with stone steps that led up to counters approximately two meters tall. The elevation

allowed staff members to have a towering view of the interior. This meant the majority of the mercenaries needed to walk up to the stone step counters to talk with them.

Ge En whispered, "Yin Zhu, you can tell that these peacekeepers are not strong. Except within this building, no one dares to offend them. If anyone dares to cause a disturbance, their Mercenary License would be immediately revoked. To the left is the mission retrieval center, and unlike other Mercenary Branches, only D rank missions or higher exist. If they're not a D rank mercenary company or higher, they are not qualified to accept a mission here. To the right is the mission reward center where the commissions are obtained. The side closest to the middle is the mercenary guild's registration and promotion counter.

On both sides of the counter, even though it was the inner counter, there were several people waiting in lines. Ye Yin Zhu and Ge En walked up to the inner counter, intending to join the line. Suddenly a loud exclamation came from the inner counter.

"S rank mercenary company. Two S rank mercenary companies are born....."

Although it was originally concentrated, the crowd of mercenary companies parted like tidewater, exposing the inner counter. The sudden exclamation had the mercenaries from the mission retrieval counter and the mission reward center also gather around. Amazed gazes were cast towards the end of the opened pathway.

Altogether, three individuals walked out from the counter. Obviously, they just recently accomplished a mercenary company upgrade. Walking in the middle was a mage wearing a gray magic robe. He appeared approximately 50 to 60 years old with a slim stature and simple facial features. His white hair was neatly combed and gathered at the back of his head. Walking as light as a feather down the path, his two eyes were brimming with an intimidating aura. No one dared to face those eyes head on. The most frightening thing was the tremendous elemental magic undulating around his body. Because it was excessively compressed, Yin Zhu felt that this mage's elemental magic aura was somewhat viscous. The individuals the mage's eyes swept over immediately became stifled. A violet whirlwind engraved emblem rested proudly on the left side of his chest, fully reflecting his strength.

“A Great Mage, he is actually a Violet Rank Great Mage.” Ge En’s eyes almost popped out. As they were at the peak existences on the continent, every Great Mage that emerged would become the center of attention.

Ye Yin Zhu and Ge En’s train of thoughts were completely different, however. In his mind, he secretly thought, ‘This elemental mage has reached the Violet Rank. Is this his strength?’ Yin Zhu’s eyes could barely make out the profoundness of the mage’s spiritual force. Grandfather Qin didn’t have an elemental magic aura as great as this, but his spiritual force was apparently stronger.

At the Great Mage’s side stood a male and a female, both quite young. The youth on the left was approximately 26-27 years old, his whole body protected by an exquisite silver armor that covered everything except the joints. With his broad shoulders, he appeared handsome, but also somewhat ice-cold with long golden hair draped and scattered over his shoulders. To the right side of his waist rested a sword hilt. What Yin Zhu took note of the most was that on the left side of his chest, there was something violet-colored that he had previously come across; it was the exact same Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander engraving Ao Si Ding had. To the right side of the Great Mage was a young girl who appeared to only be 16-17 years old. With neat, short hair cropped at the ears, she appeared valiant and formidable. The faint pink magic robe she wore could not completely conceal her already matured figure. Her delicate, charming face expressed a prideful look. Two watery blue eyes flickered with the light of an old soul. She pulled at the Great Mage’s hand with a smile on her face. What Yin Zhu paid attention to the most was that on the left side of her chest was a magic emblem. To his surprise it was yellow. To reach the Yellow Rank at such a young age was absolutely shocking. The Yellow Rank emblem was indicative of an advanced mage. Even if it was merely at the primary level, it was sufficient enough to amaze.

“Uncle, if the mercenary company had a Violet Rank member, could it become a S rank mercenary company?”

Ge En replied, “Violet Rank member is necessary for the S rank mercenary company emblem, but that’s not the only requirement; it is like how the Iron Brambles needed you to come assist in upgrading the mercenary company rank.

S rank mercenary company would also need at least one Violet Rank, but they also need to have extraordinarily powerful strength.”

“Oh. So that is to say, S rank mercenary company is also nothing much,” Yin Zhu indifferently stated. His two grandfathers were both Violet Rank. To his understanding, Violet Rank was not an unattainable level. After all, his zither magic cultivation equivalent, the Violet Zither Heart, was not the final level.

His voice fell, and Yin Zhu’s face slightly changed. He stepped to the side instinctually, a strand of light wind passed through where he once was. Yin Zhu raised his head and looked up in time to face the Great Mage and the glowering young girl at his side. Obviously, she had heard Yin Zhu as at that moment, the party of three was passing by Yin Zhu and Ge En.

“What are you doing?” Yin Zhu asked with slight anger. If not for his quick reaction, he would have been in the path of the windblade. Although it was only a wink of Red Rank magic, it was enough to destroy the clothes on his body.

The young girl arrogantly lifted her head. “Did you not say that an S rank mercenary company was nothing much? I want to know what rank your mercenary company is. You’re only a Red Rank mage, that’s all, and you dare to talk nonsense here.”

Ye Yin Zhu stared at her blankly. “What nonsense? I am merely stating a fact, nothing more. What’s wrong with Red Rank? Didn’t you ascend from Red Rank as well? Which cultivation does not require this ascension.”

“You……” The young girl released the Great Mage’s hand, fiercely walking up to Yin Zhu. Wind had already begun condensing around her body, capable of exploding at any time.

Chapter 7 – Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts (II)

“Good girl, you shouldn’t cause trouble,” the Great Mage’s deep voice rang loudly. Calling to the young girl, his vision swept over Yin Zhu’s body. His gaze was very plain, neither sad nor happy. He stopped slightly. When he sensed Yin Zhu’s graceful temperament, he couldn’t help but be somewhat amazed. In particular, Yin Zhu’s crystal-clear eyes left him a very profound impression.

The young girl furiously glared at Yin Zhu. “Don’t let me see you again, you’re not even good-looking.”

“My mother told me as a child that I am good-looking. I do not need to look even better.” Yin Zhu quite naturally replied. To him, it was the simple truth. To others, however, it became a mocking reply. Immediately, the surrounding mercenaries for the most part roared with laughter. Having the courage to offend somebody from an S rank mercenary company, in the eyes of the numerous mercenaries, the mere Red Rank Yin Zhu and his noble, graceful temperament was certainly that of a noble young master.

The young girl once again turned around to glare at Yin Zhu. She apparently wanted to commit his figure to memory before snorting and leaving in large strides.

The Iron Brambles smoothly finished registering as a D rank, probably during the quarrel between Yin Zhu and the young girl. Ge En finally had his wish fulfilled to become a mercenary company head. In order to express his gratitude to Yin Zhu for his assistance, not only did he give Yin Zhu 20 gold coins as he initially promised, he also personally sent him off in front of the entrance to the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.

“Yin Zhu, we must go back. The competition in Milan is too large, we can’t stay here for work. You must be careful when being here all by yourself. If we have another mission to Milan, I will definitely try to find you. In addition, you are very pure and kindhearted. Thus, no matter what happens, you should protect your good nature as much as possible.” Ge En resembled an elder as he repeatedly warned Yin Zhu. The pure feeling from Yin Zhu’s body had been something he had not come across for many years.

Yin Zhu's eyes were slightly red. He nodded and said, "Uncle, you all take care of yourselves on the journey back. If not for your help, I would still not have known what to do."

Ge En laughed out loud, "In the future, we'll have an opportunity to meet. I'm leaving now, and you are reporting to the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. Oh, right. From what I see, An Ya is not an ordinary person seeing as how the Dragon Cavalry Commander had a polite air around her. If anything happens to you, remember to find her for help. I saw that she has a favorable impression of you, so she'll certainly not reject you."

His eyes followed Ge En's departing back until he disappeared. Yin Zhu then turned around to face his destination.

Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was adjacent to the east entrance of Milan City. It was only when he truly arrived here that he understood why of all the human countries upon the continent, the most advanced institution was located on the outskirts of Milan City and not inside Milan City. It was because its acreage was huge. Because the perimeter wall of the institution was separated from Milan City's walls by only a thin line, at first glance, it was like you didn't even reach the city boundaries yet.

Ye Yin Zhu, on the way to Milan, had listened to An Ya's explanations. Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was also called the Milan Imperial Institution. Located within the Milan Empire, it possessed an extremely majestic status. As the first school on the continent, it was unknown the number of young practitioners who cultivated there. All of the people capable of attending and studying at Milan Imperial Institution felt proud. The Emperor of Milan was actually the esteemed headmaster of the Milan Imperial Institution. Apart from the royal family, anyone wanting to attend the school to study only had one method to do so – passing the test. Someone once said that the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was only second in strength to the Blue Dias encampment. Milan City's east entrance was also the only side the army does not need to defend as the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts disciples provided an extremely tough defense.

The institution's tall entrance was 20 meters in height and 50 meters wide, with a gilded plaque engraved with the Milan Empire crest. Even though it was

only the main entrance, one could clearly sense the pure aura assaulting the senses.

After walking through the door, there was a pathway leading to the interior that was broad enough for gnus to walk through side by side. The sides of the roads were lined with tall trees; the trees' shade hid the sky and covered the earth. Their lush and flourishing branches and leaves exemplified the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts' ancient existence.

The numerous trees made the interior of the institution's atmosphere feel very comfortable, the similar atmosphere making it seem as if Ye Yin Zhu was back at the Desolate Jade Sea. He sucked in a deep breath of air. Ever since he left home, this was the first time that he felt comfortable in an environment.

Observing the movements of the numerous students, Yin Zhu discovered that these students were all attired in red and white alternating school uniforms. On the left side of the chest was a simple imprint to distinctly display their different cultivation paths. During this short observational period, Yin Zhu found that the magic six-pointed star design designated the person as a mage, while the double-edged sword and shield design designated the person as a warrior. The exquisite longbow design designated the person as an archer, and so on and so forth. Located to the side of these patterns were a number of small red and white lines with an unknown meaning.

Originally Yin Zhu intended to enter the campus and find someone to inquire about where to register, but he discovered that he did not need to enter the institution's interior. Located beside the main pathway were explicit directions detailing the direction in which to go to register. He did not know that he just chanced upon Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts' last student registration day. If he had arrived in accordance to the arrangements by his teacher, Qin Shang, this would have been unnecessary. Except he did not have the introduction letter, so his desire to be a student was certainly no longer simple.

Following the sign's instructions, Yin Zhu quickly found the registration area. A row of exquisite buildings stood with empty lots in front of them. Each building had at least several hundred square meters of acreage. Different writings symbolizing distinct disciplines were on front of the door of each building. The

disciplines were generally subdivided into magic and martial arts categories. Among these were several types of subdivisions. On the front door of the last building, Yin Zhu found the three words – “Divine Music Mage.”

There was only one person in the registration office. In addition, they were leaning forward on the desk, asleep. Her long hair draping over her shoulders indicated she was a woman.

“Hello,” Yin Zhu called out.

“En?” Leaning forward, the woman somewhat dazedly lifted her head up, revealing a delicate, charming face to Yin Zhu. She appeared to be 26-27 years old, her long cyan hair draping over her shoulders somewhat messily as she was previously sleeping. Because of her position, it was difficult to see her stature, but she was an unconditionally beautiful woman. Because she woke up from her nap at the sound of Yin Zhu’s voice, she appeared to have a somewhat languid and graceful temperament.

“Hello, I came to register.”

“Oh, so to register, fill out a form and pay the 10 gold coin registration fee. Even if you did not pass the entrance exam, the registration fee is nonrefundable.” While she spoke, she naturally took out a form and placed it in front of Yin Zhu along with a goose feather brush to fill out the registration form with.

“Thank you, teacher,” Yin Zhu replied. The form was simple with only five sections needing to be filled out: name, gender, age, cultivation level, and birthplace.

“Ah!” Just as Yin Zhu prepared to fill out the form, the female teacher suddenly shrieked loudly. She abruptly rose from her station and opened her eyes wide. The dark green eyes blankly stared at Yin Zhu.

Yin Zhu was alarmed by her shriek, instinctively taking a step backwards and almost stumbling over a chair beside his body. “What’s going on?”

“You, are you definitely sure you didn’t enter the wrong registration office?” The female teacher muttered her question.

Yin Zhu turned around to glance at the doorway with the “Divine Music Mage”

sign and nodded. He said, “Ah, yes! This is the Divine Music mage registration office.”

The female teacher cried out in exaggeration, “Oh heavens! Is this the saying, a blade of grass among ten thousand flowers? The Divine Music division finally has a male student, unbelievable! Quick, immediately hand over the registration fee. The Divine Music division’s entrance exam should have just begun. There’s still time.”

Chapter 7 – Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts (III)

Although this female teacher was somewhat strange, Yin Zhu nevertheless acted upon her instructions. The amount of gold coins on his body halved all at once.

“Teacher, where is the exam held?”

“I’ll guide you as it is improbable anyone else is going to come and register as a Divine Music mage. The other registration offices were all packed with people a few days before while I only had two or three kittens here with me. Come, follow me.”

Walking away from the registration office, the female teacher stopped her stroll. Both of her hands folded over her chest, forefingers crossing to form a six-pointed star shape. Quietly reciting a few incantations, a path of light bubbled out from her chest as she used her finger to draw a distinctly orange six-pointed star. The brilliant rays flashed, and a huge figure appeared in front of her.

Naturally, it was a gnu, but Ye Yin Zhu had ridden a different breed earlier. This gnu was white; moreover, it was triple the size of the gnu he previously rode. It had a length of five meters and a height of nearly two meters. Its body emitted an aura that a rank 1 magic beast was not capable of possessing. Even though it had just appeared, it had already docilely lowered its body, allowing the female teacher to climb up.

“Teacher, this is your magic beast?”

“Yes. My name is Bi Ji, so you can call me Teacher Bi Ji. Climb up. If you walk, you won’t get there in a short enough amount of time. It’s better to ride a gnu as it’s somewhat faster.”

Yin Zhu immediately and impolitely climbed onto the gnu, freeing himself from the burden of walking. As this white-furred gnu’s body was quite long, he was unlikely to have contact with Bi Ji’s body in front of him after he climbed onto the gnu. The white gnu got up on its hind legs and walked forward, taking large

strides in the direction Bi Ji pointed at. Although the speed was quite fast, they did not feel any strong vibrations while sitting atop the gnu. The ride was smooth and cozy.

“Teacher, you can ride magic beasts inside the institution?”

“Of course. Milan Institution of Magic and Martial Arts’s size is equivalent to one-fifth of Milan City. If we can only walk on foot, then only the warrior division will be fine. What will mages do? My Little White is a very rare rank 3 jade gnu with superb endurance.”

“Rank 3? A mage can also have a rudimentary magic beast?” Yin Zhu looked down at Bi Ji’s body, astonished. An Ya once told him that due to the importance of a magic beast and mage partnership, generally speaking, mages would wait until their magic attained a certain level before deciding upon a magic beast. Warriors agreed to and signed contracts with magic beasts as well, but they were incapable of summoning their magic beasts to them like mages. Although it was this way, warriors could just sign contracts unlike mages’ permanent contracts which only allowed them to sign once throughout their lifetime. If their magic beast died, warriors could pay a certain price, and they would be given the opportunity to agree to and sign another contract with a new magic beast.

Bi Ji groaned and said, “Although I am a mage, I am only an Orange Rank Divine Music mage, nothing more. We Divine Music mages do not need to battle. Riding instead of walking is sufficient. If you want to become powerful, now’s the time to change the specialty you registered for. There’s still time.”

“No need, I precisely chose to be a Divine Music mage.” Yin Zhu fell silent. After interacting with An Ya as well as Teacher Bi Ji, he already completely realized the status of a Divine Music mage on the continent. It was not surprising that few people chose this vocation.

After the jade gnu followed the main street and detoured through a few back alleys, before his eyes the scenery suddenly gradually opened up to a wide panorama of numerous lofty buildings and vast stretches of open land. Numerous students also wandered here. Bi Ji urged her jade gnu forward to a circular building and stopped right in front of it. Dismounting, “Finally. Here is the Divine Music mage’s divisional auditorium.”

Not waiting for Yin Zhu, who had begun to carefully examine the building before his eyes, Bi Ji immediately led him into the auditorium. The auditorium was not large as it only had the capacity for approximately 500 people. Currently, there were only 40 individuals inside, making the auditorium appear absolutely empty. As Yin Zhu and Bi Ji entered through the back of the auditorium, they could only see these people from behind. Yin Zhu assumed from their proper manners that they were all girls. Each girl faced a table with their musical instrument arranged atop it.

On the stage of the auditorium was a girl, sitting in front of an ancient wooden table, a guzheng arranged atop it. The girl wore a long white skirt, and similar to Yin Zhu, she also had a black hair. Because she was lowering her head to tune the guzheng, her black hair completely concealed her facial features, making Yin Zhu incapable of looking at her appearance. When she plucked the zither, however, she attracted Yin Zhu's full attention.

Naturally, her two hands were as tender as spring green onions, each with slender and fine fingers. Even white jade carvings were not as exquisitely lustrous and silky as her hands. Each finger had nails an inch long. The fingernails were as sparkling and translucent as crystals, each finger lightly flicking against the strings created natural and harmonious movements that appeared graceful and charming.

"Try to find a seat and sit down, the entrance exam will begin immediately," Bi Ji told Yin Zhu.

"Teacher Bi Ji, what does the entrance exam require?"

Bi Ji faintly smiled and answered, "As long as you can listen to her play her song, you will pass the exam." She walked to the side and took a seat alone in the corner after she finished speaking.

Yin Zhu looked at his surroundings. Suddenly, his eyes brightened as he caught sight of a zither. Nearly without any hesitation, he quickly claimed the zither beside the girl and sat down. His eyes were already inseparable from the zither in front of him. The Jade Charm Zither, this was the Jade Charm Zither!

.....

“Yin Zhu, the zither is the most ancient string instrument. It is a traditional cultural gem and can be rated as the best musical instrument. The Zither Sect actually possesses five zithers, all first generation zithers, but that is still profoundly insufficient because we do not have a genuine Divine Zither. If you discover those other zithers, you must do your utmost to obtain it. Especially if it is one of the five peerless legendary zithers, which are naturally equal to a Divine instrument’s existence.”

“Grandfather Qin, what are the names of those zithers?”

“There are many kinds of zithers, divided into numerous categories like Dragon God Style, Five Bead Style, Lute Style, Whimsical Myriad Style, Phoenix Power Style, et cetera.....”

.....

The memory of Qin Shang’s words flashed through his mind; the Jade Charm Zither, while not a peerless Divine Zither, was still equally ranked to the Thundering Spring Zither!

At this moment, the young lady with the guqin in front of her turned her head to look at Yin Zhu. Upon discovering that it was unexpectedly a male by her side, she couldn’t help but be amazed, her small mouth opening up slightly. She was completely attired in light blue clothing, her long hair a similar shade as it was neatly arranged over her shoulders. Although she didn’t resemble An Ya, she still had a beauty that shook people to the core. Her gentle eyebrows made it easy to give people a good impression, especially her azure eyes which, despite the amazement within them, was still extraordinarily gentle.

At this moment, the guzheng note echoed loudly. Instantly, everyone became shocked. Yin Zhu allowed his gaze to be forcefully pulled away from the Jade Charm Zither.

The guzheng’s shape resembled the guqin. The guqin, however, was bigger with several more strings, normally 21 strings. The guqin manifested an illustriously elegant sound, loudly and clearly breaking the silence. Moreover, the guqin was easier to control. Qin Shang had told Yin Zhu that among numerous antique musical instruments, the zither was the emperor and the guzheng the

empress. It is quite difficult for the zither to perform with any musical instrument or ensemble, excluding the xiao. In contrast, the guzheng could arbitrary perform music with any musical instrument in any musical ensemble. The guzheng's sound was relatively clearer, brighter, and more pleasant to listen to. Its sound register was also broader, but it had less of an elegant, profound temperament, possessing a prolonged, pleasant lingering effect.

On stage, the girl actually began playing the guzheng. The note echoed for a split second, like a lofty mountain and flowing river. The guzheng notes emitted an orange radiance, attracting everyone's attention simultaneously. The clear, bright guzheng notes were brimming with emotions as it carried a sorrowful air. Two long lily-white hands vibrated, brushed, and plucked the strings of the guzheng. As the guzheng music was released, an orange radiance illuminated the room. The guzheng music was like a spiritual thread, ensnaring every one of their minds.

Chapter 7 – Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts (IV)

Yin Zhu’s eyes stared straight at the white-clothed girl on stage, his vision of her already somewhat blurred. He muttered to himself, “A Chinese Ghost Story.” These four words, ‘A Chinese Ghost Story,’ did not describe the girl on stage accurately since it was the name of the guzheng song.

Both hands moved rhythmically at an extremely fast tempo. It was a natural and unforced manner that did not even project the slightest bit of loftiness. The guzheng’s sound was distinctly clear and bright. Although the Orange Rank magic strength was incapable of encompassing the whole audience, it was still pleasant to listen to the humming notes of the guzheng that clearly reached everyone’s ears. The soft, sorrowful guzheng song affected everyone’s moods. All of their expressions began to follow the rises and falls, the ups and downs, of the guzheng song. Even Yin Zhu and Teacher Bi Ji were no exceptions to this.

Yin Zhu’s vision blurred. Perhaps other people lost themselves completely to the sound waves of the sorrowful guzheng song, but this beautiful guzheng song already completely mesmerized his heart, harmoniously plucking at the deep recesses of his heart against his will. Only someone who truly understood this would be capable of completely comprehending everything in this guzheng song.

“As clear as a splash of jade and trembling like a dragon’s cry, << A Chinese Ghost Story>> is a good song.”

Not falling under her control like the others, Yin Zhu shifted the Jade Charm Zither in front of him. He didn’t tune the instrument, his hands already lightly stroking the strings. His right thumb lightly rested on it. Both of his hands already moved as smoothly as he wished, floating in the air above the seven strings. Instantly, his pure and innocent aura disappeared; although the distant journey had already somewhat tarnished the white gown that clothed his body. At this very moment, however, this noble, courteous aura complimented his handsome face perfectly.

The ancient, rustic zither quietly echoed. Yin Zhu’s movements were significantly slower than the girl’s movements on stage. Each zither note,

however, rose in spirals and lingered. Remaining calm and collected, he lightly fingered repetitions, stroking back and forth melodiously. The Jade Charm Zither's clear, prolonged notes complemented the guzheng music, making the original musical composition slightly increase in profoundness and influence.

Deep red rays of light accompanied the emitting zither notes and moved in tandem with the white-clothed girl's brilliant orange rays. The entire auditorium's interior reflected the light and brightened up as the zither notes intervened. Instead of a sense of abruptness, it was very harmonious. The white-clothed girl lifted up her bowed head for the first time.

Black hair partially covered her face, thus exposing only half of it. The partially revealed face still caused Yin Zhu's heartstrings to fiercely tremble all of a sudden. With a pale, icy, serene face, her black eyes looked straight at Yin Zhu, not even slightly astonished. The iciness in her eyes slightly dissipated, however.

The zither and guzheng were originally two incompatible musical instruments. Yin Zhu perfectly manipulated the zither to unite as one with the guzheng like a heaven-sent miracle.

The white-clothed girl gazed at Yin Zhu who also gazed back at her without his two hands atop the strings slipping at all. Their gazes met, similar to how the deep red and orange lights intertwined. Yin Zhu's hand positions changed, the light plucking of the strings turning dynamic. The graceful and downcast voices of the zither and guzheng harmoniously blended together and echoed.

“One's time on earth

Is like a dream, an endless journey

Which allows the wind and frost to leave traces upon the face In the world of mortals

This beautiful dream has numerous paths to follow Seeking love on this fantastical journey

Following a boundless and indistinct path.”

At this very moment, it seemed as if it was only the two of them left inside the auditorium. There were two basic ways of playing the guqin. One way was to play solo while the other way was to sing with the zither.

The iciness within the white-clothed girl's eyes thawed further. Endless grief was the only thing that remained. Her slightly hoarse, yet touching voice, like the cry of the phoenix, accompanied the plucked notes of the zither and guzheng as it spoke the second half of the poem.

“One's time on earth is

A prolonged dream

And most likely within this dream, most likely there are glistening teardrops
Wherever we go

Our hearts will align

The wind in this long drawn out dream lightly sighs On this boundless and vast road.”

Yin Zhu once again changed the position of his hands. He inserted his two middle fingers of his right hand into the semicircle and simultaneously pressed the strings with the ring finger, middle finger, and index finger of his left hand. The sound waves trembled, becoming somewhat gentler than before. It also slightly lessened the grief within the song << A Chinese Ghost Story>>. Accompanied by the cries of the zither and guzheng, the two of them involuntarily sung the final verse of the poem together.

“On this earthly journey

Years of happiness and youth

Under that asperous and harsh sunlight

The world of mortals

How many paths are there to happiness

Slightly resembling a dream of wind and rain Following a boundless and vast road

Slightly resembling a dream of wind and rain Following a boundless and vast road.”

Their matching, near indistinguishable singing voices quietly stopped, but the zither and guzheng notes continued to rise in spirals, echoing. As this cry fell to a hum, the endlessly haunting tune softened sorrowfully . Yin Zhu’s eyes were as clear as a mirror while that white-clothed girl’s black eyes expressed her confusion.

“Again the sunlight illuminates the rugged road. Elder sister, your guzheng song is extremely sad. Why didn’t you play a happier song?” Both of his hands rested against the strings as Yin Zhu stood up and spoke, smiling. His pure and innocent air returned and diminished the graceful and noble aura he exuded.

The white-clothed girl went from perplexed to clear-headed. With a gloomy heart, she asked herself, ‘What happened to me? I had never sung the final verse of << A Chinese Ghost Story >> before, but today I subconsciously sung it. Could it be that he influenced me to sing it?’

“The Wind Startles the Dancing Crane gesture; The Wind Carries the Gentle Cloud gesture; The Luan and Phoenix Harmoniously Cry gesture; and The Water Follows the Fallen Flower gesture – you used these four techniques to play this song, making the guzheng compatible with the zither. Wasn’t that enough? Then, why did you use your zither song to influence my mind?” The white-clothed girl’s hoarse voice rang out clear and bright, her luminous eyes stared fixedly at Yin Zhu.

“Ah, because I understood upon hearing the sorrow in your guzheng song!” It was obvious Ye Yin Zhu failed to properly interpret her question. Why did the song end like that? The white-clothed girl’s iciness intensified even more.

“You understand? Did you really understand?” She snorted coldly, her hands picking up the guzheng from the table. She turned around and walked off

backstage.

Slowly sitting down, Yin Zhu carefully placed the Jade Charm Zither to the side and thus in front of the girl from before. His eyes displayed a pondering light.

“Dong ——” The bell rang, echoing. A faint cyan light flashed within the auditorium. When Yin Zhu raised his head and spotted a woman wearing a long cyan skirt on stage, he discovered that he didn’t know what the time was. The woman appeared to be 60-70 years old. Her left hand held an exquisitely delicate bell which she clearly just struck using a rod in her right hand.

“Ah——” The sound, like that when waking up from a dream, echoed to everyone, including the girl beside Yin Zhu and Teacher Bi Ji who was sitting in an alcove. During the guzheng song, they had long ago become engrossed in it. The majority of them did not realize Yin Zhu had joined in later on. For a moment, they were still experiencing their fantasy dream. Only a few of the girls had clear eyes that displayed a pondering light similar to Yin Zhu’s.

—————

Little San intentionally searched for a song played on the guzheng – “A Chinese Ghost Story.” This song is quite graceful. Little San wants to find ways to post it online with the hope that everyone will also like it.

Chapter 8 – Registration Crisis (I)

“Good, today’s exam is over. Next, those whose names I call out, stay behind to enroll in the institution. The rest of the applicants may leave and come again next year.” The old lady’s emotions could not be deciphered from her very low voice.

The old lady read aloud 11 names, causing those whose names were read to reveal happy faces. Those whose names weren’t read revealed discontented faces and exited the auditorium. Yin Zhu was also one of those not called out, but he did not move because he was still pondering what the white-clothed girl said before she left.

“You, stand up. Tell me your name.”

“Hello? Dean Nina called you.” The girl possessing the Jade Charm Zither by Yin Zhu’s side poked him and roused him from his thoughts. This girl was also one of those who remained. Now, she looked at Yin Zhu, her gaze without the slightest amount of astonishment but with a multitude of other emotions.

“Eh?” Yin Zhu subconsciously stood up. “I, I am called Ye Yin Zhu. Hello, Grandmother Nina.”

Silence, the entire auditorium suddenly fell completely silent.

“Am I very old?” Her extreme display of rage apparently broke the whole auditorium’s silence, instigating light laughter. The 11 girls’ gazes were completely focused on the youth of similar age among them. Who didn’t know that the Divine Music division Dean Nina hated it when other people calling her old.

“This... my grandfather said, it’s customary to call women who look significantly older Grandmother.”

“You...” Looking puzzledly at Yin Zhu, Nina wished she could pound him with the bell in her hand. But when she looked into Yin Zhu’s crystal clear, black eyes,

she repressed the rage in her heart with great difficulty. “Did you also come to enroll in the Divine Music division?”

Bi Ji had already risen and walked up by now. She replied to this question for Yin Zhu. “Yes, that’s right. Dean, he just recently arrived to enroll. I led him here. You see...” She glanced thoughtfully at Yin Zhu in the audience as she spoke. She remained clear-headed just a moment ago and heard Yin Zhu and the white-clothed girl’s duet. One could say she was the most clear-headed due to being an Orange Rank Divine Music mage. It was difficult for her to believe that the youngster’s zither art had already reached a degree to which she was unexpectedly far inferior to.

Nina snorted and said, “I still didn’t expect a boy to come study to be a Divine Music mage. Good, you have been accepted. You may now go enroll in the institution. All of you, leave.” She turned around and left once she finished speaking.

“Wow, a male Divine Music mage, a male actually chose this vocation? Very interesting.” The enthusiastic exclamation startled Yin Zhu, making him jump. He caught sight of a short-haired petite figure approximately 16-17 years old. Bouncy and vivacious, she ran up to his side. She looked at him curiously, her facial features indescribable. The other girls who passed the exam also came over and surrounded him.

“Hello! Why did you choose the Divine Music vocation? Ah! I have never seen a male who wanted to learn this useless magic!”

A sweet smelling breeze assailed his nostrils. Aware of male-female relations because of An Ya’s explanations, Yin Zhu’s face couldn’t help but turn crimson upon being surrounded by the numerous females. The delicate maiden fragrance lingered at the tip of his nose, and he clearly felt his heartbeat speed up. Having never felt this strange feeling before, Yin Zhu’s mind felt somewhat apprehensive. Scratching his head in puzzlement, he said, “What do you mean by Divine Music mages being no good?”

“Ah, very interesting! The blade of grass among ten thousand flowers is such a handsome young boy. I saw you play the zither just now; do you study the zither?” the first delicate, charming girl who ran over asked excitedly.

Yin Zhu nodded and said, “Yes!”

“Hello, I am Chui Xiao.”

Yin Zhu’s eyes lit up. He knew that the xiao was the only musical instrument capable of perfectly playing music with the zither. “Very good, in the future I must experience Chui Xiao’s art.

After a brief moment of silence, the girls surrounding him roared with laughter.

“Killing me, she said she is Chui Xiao¹; you shouldn’t give this young boy failure and misery...”

Yin Zhu confusedly asked, “She’s going to give me failure and misery?”

The roar of laughter immediately increased in volume, numerous girls already bending over at the waist and laughing. Yin Zhu’s innocence couldn’t help but create a favorable impression among them. The first male student in the history of the Divine Music division was quite entertaining.

The short-haired girl realized her misspoken words. Immediately her charming face turned as red as Yin Zhu’s with shame. “You’re all dead...”

“Well, girls, come on. Are you not worried about frightening your future classmate? In the future, all of you will study together. There are plenty of chances for you to be together. Now follow me to register.” Bi Ji resisted smiling. She looked at this lively group of girls and couldn’t help but feel somewhat envious. Ten years ago, one couldn’t be like them, carefree and without worries.

Under Bi Ji’s guidance, the 12 new Divine Music division students, including Yin Zhu, exited the auditorium. Yin Zhu walked at the back and stared at these lively girls. His heart felt very comfortable as he thought to himself, ‘Apparently my future at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts will be pretty good!’

“Hello.” By Yin Zhu’s side, a gentle and soft, somewhat timid voice chimed out. It was the girl who sat by Ye Yin Zhu previously, the girl in possession of the Jade Charm Zither. Her height barely reached Yin Zhu’s chest. Her blue clothing matched her azure eyes which were as gentle as a stream. Her soft aura reminded Yin Zhu of An Ya, only this girl was significantly more underdeveloped compared to An Ya.

Yin Zhu quickly replied, "Hello, just now I borrowed your zither..."

The girl hastily interrupted him, "It doesn't matter. Your zither playing is really good; oh, your singing is also good."

"You heard?" Yin Zhu looked at the girl, amazed. Although he didn't deliberately control his aura and magical strength, it was unlikely for those without a certain understanding of the zither song and decent spiritual power to hear his zither music.

The girl nodded, "Yes! But I only heard half of the first verse. After that, I can't recall the rest. My mind was completely immersed in the cries of your zither and the guzheng. I remember, the zither and guzheng couldn't perform music together. How did you accomplish that? Can you tell me? Oh, that's right. You are called Ye Yin Zhu. I am called Lan Xi."

Yin Zhu said, "It is indeed extremely challenging for the zither and guzheng to perform music together. If it is a short musical composition, however, some skill and different fingering methods can still make this possible. It's just that it is quite difficult to complement one another, that's all. One party has no other choice but to play in the background of the other."

Lan Xi suddenly understood and said, "So it's like this, but without outstanding skill, I'm afraid that this is awfully difficult to accomplish. Your zither playing must be very good. Afterwards, can you teach me? I have merely just begun studying."

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, "It's okay! I can't be your teacher; I still have a long way to go. If you have any questions, you can ask me. I'll explain as long as I know the answer."

"Thank you, you are a really good person. Just now they teased you like that, but you didn't get angry." Lan Xi's attractive face blushed lightly as she whispered.

Yin Zhu forced a smile and said, "I didn't get angry because some of their words I didn't understand."

Lan Xi stuck out her cute little tongue and exclaimed, "Just now, you have a lot of nerve! Unexpectedly calling Dean Nina grandmother, don't tell me you didn't

know she hates other people calling her old? Fortunately, your zither playing is good. Otherwise, it would have been difficult for you to be accepted.”

Yin Zhu was surprised and asked, “Really? I didn’t know!”

Lan Xi showed him a defeated expression. “It is unlikely you didn’t know. Don’t tell me that you have arrived to take the exam without investigating the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts? Don’t tell me that you know nothing about it at all.”

Yin Zhu nodded seriously. “I truly didn’t know!”

Chapter 8 – Registration Crisis (II)

Lan Xi covered her small mouth and said, “Praise Blue Dias! So you really are... you must be really lucky to pass the exam like this. Fortunately you chose the Divine Music division, which has few people. Relatively speaking, the rejection rate is low. Other divisions’ rejection rates are very high. Every year, there are at least twenty thousand people who come to Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts to enroll, but the final number of accepted applicants never surpass two thousand, a ten percent chance. Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts is divided into the north and south districts. The south district is the warrior district who all train according to their specialization over there. The north district, where we currently are, is the mage district. Each division’s mage has a specialty here. Regardless of whether it is the north district or the south district, the teaching area is in the middle of the institution. Neighboring them are training areas for every specialization. Luckily the road to the teaching area is quite close. Otherwise, we will suffer hardships walking from one area to the next. Today is the final day for registration, so every specialization has gathered together.”

Just as she finished, Bi Ji and the twelve students arrived in front of a tall school building. There were many makeshift stone counters in charge of student registration fees irrespective of speciality. Bi Ji waved her hand and said, “Well, everyone can go. School officially starts the day after tomorrow. Only after you have completed registration will the institution assign you dormitories to live in. You can also go out, but you must remember to pay attention to safety.” Once she finished speaking, she glanced at Yin Zhu who was in the middle of the crowd of females. She then summoned her jade gnu once more and left.

“Praise Blue Dias! Quickly, look! The new beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division have arrived!” an unknown person cried out.

Although the Divine Music division at Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was a support vocation, one had to admit that the accepted girls of this vocation were practically all beautiful ladies. Suddenly, everyone focused on the 11 beautiful ladies. The gazes of the other divisions’ newly accepted students all

focused on them as well.

Regardless of location, the impact of beautiful women was immense. The lines of new students immediately became chaotic, several of them fawning upon the beautiful ladies.

“Come up here to register! The beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division never have to wait in line.” Immediately, several registration locations opened up. The new students revolved around the Divine Music division’s 11 beautiful ladies who quite quickly stepped up to finish registering.

Yin Zhu, standing behind the beautiful ladies, also prepared to register at this time, but someone stopped him.

“Little boy, what division are you? Are you trying to take advantage of a crisis for personal gain?” Two tall male students blocked Yin Zhu’s path, glowering at him.

Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “I am also part of the Divine Music division. Why can I not register?”

“You are a part of the Divine Music division? Thinking and making up such a horrible lie, what boy would choose to join the Divine Music division?” The red-haired male student disdainfully snorted, clenching his massive fist. Yin Zhu’s handsome face easily caused the male student to be jealous, especially since Yin Zhu arrived together with the beautiful ladies.

“Who said the Divine Music division cannot have a male student? I can testify that he is part of the Divine Music division.” The short-haired beauty who called herself Chui Xiao had finished registering and had stepped up to Yin Zhu’s side some unknown period of time ago.

“Eh?”

Instantly, everyone became quiet. Whether they were registering or fawning over the beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division, all of their gazes centralized on Yin Zhu’s body. He had become the center of attention.

The red-haired male student stared foolishly at Yin Zhu. “He, he’s really part of the Divine Music division?”

The short-haired beauty loftily replied, “That’s right! Would I, Xue Ling, lie?”

The male student’s countenance changed. Suddenly, he strode forward and stood in front of Yin Zhu. before Yin Zhu could react, the student, with an excited face, already held his hand.

“Idol! You must be a prodigy at picking up girls, right? In order to be able to pick up the beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division, you unexpectedly, without hesitation, self-harmed yourself to enter the Divine Music division. Admiring, extremely admiring. Idol, accept me as your little brother. You must impart your sect teachings on picking up girls to me.”

Everyone present roared with laughter. For a moment, all kinds of envious, jealous, and disdainful gazes rested on Yin Zhu. From the moment this started, the blade of grass among ten thousand flowers, the Divine Music division’s first male student, the idol, and other addresses kept being added onto Yin Zhu’s head, making him become the new center of attention. He instantly became a Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts celebrity.

Yin Zhu shook off the other’s hand, frowned, and said, “Self-harm? Why would I be harming myself? Does the Divine Music division really not have any male students?”

The red-haired male student, without the slightest hesitation, replied, “Of course, since the establishment of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts several hundred years ago, you are unconditionally the one and only male student. Idol, I admire your spirit of sacrifice. I didn’t realize this at the beginning. I am the Swordmaster division’s Fei Si Qie La. You must remember me! Since you are of the Divine Music division, you can immediately register.” As he spoke, he thought to himself, ‘Looking at this very simple boy, it will be good to have a good relationship with him. I fear if there will even be another opportunity to approach the Divine Music division’s beautiful ladies in the future. He cannot possibly handle this many beautiful ladies by himself.’ Thinking of this, he couldn’t help the smile at the corner of his mouth becoming somewhat lewd.

Xue Ling testified that Yin Zhu was of the Divine Music division, so no one else blocked him.

“One hundred gold coins.” Sitting behind the desk was a strictly impartial and incorruptible teacher. His ice-cold voice made people feel as if it was winter.

“Oh? So expensive.” Yin Zhu looked stupefied at him and extracted the entirety of his assets, ten gold coins, from the ring An Ya had given him. “Teacher, I only have this much.” Although he expected the tuition fee to be quite expensive, he didn’t expect it to be this excessively expensive. One hundred gold coins was enough for an ordinary family to pay their expenses for several years, but here, it was only the tuition for a single term.

“Why did you come to Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts without money? This tuition is not only to stay in the dorms; some of it is used for magical material in lessons and venue costs are also included in the bill. Since you don’t have money, leave.” The teacher repulsively waved at Yin Zhu as if he was a housefly.

“I remember that he dared to criticize our mercenary company and its greatness, but I didn’t expect the idiot can’t even pay the tuition fee.” At this moment, the lined up stream of people automatically parted, and a pink silhouette entered his vision.

This person recognized Yin Zhu, having previously met him at the Mercenary Guild. She was the female mage of the S rank mercenary company. Now, she advanced towards Yin Zhu step by step, the registering students parting for her one after another. They clearly recognized her.

“I’m not an idiot,” Yin Zhu said lowly.

The girl objected. “Arriving at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts without the tuition fee, in addition to choosing the Divine Music division, are you still not an idiot? A pauper unexpectedly dared to criticize our Violet Mercenary Company. I see, you had better take a hike and leave this place. The Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts does not welcome poor bastards.”

“You...” Yin Zhu glared and took a step forward. His right fist was clenched tightly as he, with great difficulty, suppressed his fury. “I don’t hit women.”

“Haha...” The girl laughed heartily. “Is this a joke? You think you can hit me? Aren’t you only a Red Rank mage? You can’t even pay the tuition fee, get lost! Leave so I don’t have to look at your irksome presence.” Her words brimmed

with contempt.

“Who said he doesn’t have the money to pay for his tuition fee? I’m paying for his tuition.” The icy voice echoed, making the crowd shiver. A path opened up within the crowd, and a slender figure gradually became visible. Dressed in a long white skirt with a faint, cold aura, the figure who unexpectedly arrived was the girl who previously performed a duet with Yin Zhu in the auditorium.

Chapter 8 – Registration Crisis (III)

Black hair still concealed the left side of her face as she slowly walked up to Yin Zhu’s side. She threw a ruby coin onto the table and faced the teacher in charge of registration. “This is his tuition fee.” There were very few ruby coins that circulated the market. Only high-ranked nobles used them. One ruby coin was equivalent to a hundred gold coins.

“Hai Yang, it’s you. You are going against me again,” the female mage angrily said.

“Luo Lan, I am not going against you. I merely cannot watch you bully our Divine Music division’s new student.” Hai Yang’s voice sounded as glacial as before. Yin Zhu’s heart, however, warmed. Her pale face appeared to be even more noble.

Luo Lan pointed a finger at Yin Zhu and said, “Well, this means you’re accepted. If you’re a man, however, in three days we’ll compete at the Freshman Competition and see who’s better. Otherwise, whenever you see me, make a detour and fuck off.” After she said this, she paused, her eyes shining with a mocking light. She pretended to receive a flash of realization. “Oh, I forgot. You’re part of the Divine Music division. The Divine Music division never participates in the Freshman Competition. Do you even have any offensive power?”

“I’ll participate,” Yin Zhu accepted Luo Lan’s challenge. He blurted out his agreement without thinking.

Hai Yang wrinkled her brow and whispered, “Don’t be so impulsive...”

“I’m participating,” Yin Zhu repeated once more. With a resolute and dedicated gaze, he continued, “Although I don’t know what the Freshman Competition is, I accept your challenge.” At this very moment, he recalled his childhood. His grandfather said during his first Bamboo Dou Qi lesson, ‘A man cannot be arrogant, but he can be unyielding. As the successor to the Bamboo Sect, you need to possess a backbone as tall and straight as a bamboo.’

Luo Lan hummed, “Good! I’ll see you in the competition then – if you can meet

me. I reckon you'll be unable to pass the first round or will just want to lie down on your bed. Perhaps you won't even qualify for the competition." Finished speaking, she shot a glance at Hai Yang who was standing by Ye Yin Zhu, turned around, and left. She apparently didn't want to confront Hai Yang face to face.

Looking at Luo Lan's back, Yin Zhu's eyes displayed a thoughtful light. At this moment, he seemed to have slightly grown up.

"You really want to participate in the Freshman Competition? Our Divine Music division never joins!" Xue Ling uneasily said.

Ye Yin Zhu nodded towards Xue Ling, "Yes. I want to participate. My grandfather told me, 'A man cannot shrink from any challenge.'"

Xue Ling stared at Yin Zhu with amazement. Her beautiful pupils dilated as she smiled and said, "Good! I'm participating too."

"Me too. I'll also support you," a shy voice resounded. Lan Xi, who Yin Zhu had just met not long ago, spoke up.

Hai Yang's voice was still calm and flat. "The Freshman Competition is led by a senior of the division."

Ye Yin Zhu suddenly recalled something and hastily said, "Thank you, but I cannot accept your money." He turned his body towards the table and tried to find the ruby coin, but the teacher collected it already.

Hai Yang slowly walked away and said, "You're just borrowing, that's all. You can pay me back later." She left, but regardless if it was her or her guzheng, she left a deep impression in Yin Zhu's mind.

"This is your school uniform and your dormitory key. Your dormitory is located in the mixed district, room 623." The teacher in charge of registration appeared unwilling to even glance at Yin Zhu as he placed the items in Yin Zhu's hands.

"Mixed District, room 623? Where is that?" Yin Zhu was lost. By his side, Xue Ling and Lan Xi shook their heads, indicating they didn't know either.

"I know where it is. I'll take you there." Fei Si Qie La took the initiative and opened his mouth to speak.

"Thank you." Ye Yin Zhu's heart was happy. Just a moment ago, when Luo Lan

appeared, she had influenced and changed his mood completely. It seemed that within the institution, there were many good people.

“I’ll see you tomorrow then. Don’t be late for class!” Xue Ling enthusiastically waved at Yin Zhu. Lan Xi restrained herself, merely smiling and nodding at Yin Zhu.

With the registration crisis over, the new students methodically rearranged themselves to register. Fei Si Qie La patted Yin Zhu’s back and said, “Let’s go. We’ll run, so we can get there a little quicker.”

The two of them walked away from the crowd. Fei Si Qie La ran ahead of Yin Zhu. Although the running pace was not very fast, his strides were huge; as a result, his speed was not slow.

Yin Zhu followed closely by his side step by step and asked, “Fei Si Qie La, where is the mixed district? Is it very far?”

Fei Si Qie La laughed and replied, “I suppose the teacher in charge of registration saw that you had no money so he arranged for you to live in the mixed district. Of course, if you were a female student, you would have lived in the line of Divine Music division dormitories. It’s a pity that you are the first male student of the Divine Music division. They do not have female students living in mixed dormitories. The mixed district is also the work-study district. All of the students living there work part-time jobs. The environment is the worst. Although most of the students attending the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts are nobles, there are some students with good potential that lack money. They can participate in a work-study program.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes shined. “So, I am also eligible.”

Fei Si Qie La said, “Of course you can, but you would have to find the work yourself. Oh, by the way, do you really want to participate in the Freshman Competition?”

Yin Zhu nodded seriously and affirmed, “Yes! But, can you tell me what the Freshman Competition is?”

Fei Si Qie La staggered, nearly falling over. Greatly taken aback, he said, “No way. You don’t even know what the Freshman Competition is, yet you dared to

accept that little witch Luo Lan's challenge? You really deserve to be called my idol." Even though he spoke these words, he looked at Yin Zhu as if he was an idiot.

Yin Zhu scratched his head and felt somewhat embarrassed as he said, "I just arrived from Arcadia, so I am not familiar with everything here."

Fei Si Qie La said, "So it's like this. Every year, the institution accepts new students. Afterwards, the city holds a big competition for new students in order to test the quality of the new students. The competition assigns rankings to the students so it is quite possible for the institution to focus on your cultivation more. Furthermore, the top three students receive reward money."

"So good," Yin Zhu exclaimed, pleasantly surprised. He was severely lacking in money, to say the least. He still had to pay Hai Yang back a hundred gold coins. Furthermore, he also had future living expenses to deal with.

Fei Si Qie La turned around and rolled his eyes. "Really? Do you think it is easy to hold a rank? Ah! The Freshman Competition is divided in accordance to your division specialization. Each division specialization sends their strongest team to participate. Therefore, the division will host a competition to select the best students during the first three days of school. After selecting the most outstanding four individuals, a senior will lead them to participate in Freshman Competition. The division specializations will compete amongst each other by means of drawn lots. Our warriors altogether have seventeen divisions. You mages have nine divisions. Your Divine Music division is not even considered to be a complete division. You are a small division affiliated with the Spirit division. After the internal competition rounds, the warrior and mage factions choose their two best performing divisions to enter the finals. After moving on from the knockout competition, they advance towards the finals. The true champion is then determined. Every student that enters the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts are practically elites. It is extremely difficult to rise above all of the others. In the history of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, the Divine Music division has never participated in the Freshman Competition. The Spirit division is more popular. For three consecutive years, their freshmen have entered the finals. That little witch Luo Lan from earlier is the granddaughter of the Violet Clan's patriarch. A genius wind mage, she has reached the

Intermediate Level Yellow Rank at the age of 16. She can be considered to be a well-known figure among the new students. Although you just announced that the Divine Music division is competing, I'm afraid it will be extremely difficult to find five individuals willing to join..."

Chapter 8 – Registration Crisis (IV)

Even though the competition’s timeline sounded complicated, Yin Zhu was able to remember it in its entirety—all due to his exceedingly powerful memory. In his heart, he couldn’t help but feel somewhat embarrassed. It would be fine if he could just announce that he was the only one participating, but he needed a total of five people. Was the Divine Music division really trash? Just a moment ago, Xue Ling, Lan Xi, and Hai Yang all seemed to be in favor of the competition. Excluding Hai Yang, however, Xue Ling’s and Lan Xi’s spiritual powers were clearly not strong enough, not to even mention they were still missing a person. No wonder Luo Lan looked at him like that. As it turned out, just participating in the Freshman Competition was a challenge.

It was out of the question. He would compete no matter what, even if he was alone. In the end, he still wanted to join. With these thoughts in mind, he asked, “Fei Si Qie La, what are the rules for the competition? Five matches, three wins?”

Fei Si Qie La said, “There are three options. Prior to the match, both parties must agree on an option. One option is holding five matches, whichever side reaches three wins will be victorious. Another option is having both teams fight a team battle, five against five. The final option is to start with one player who will continue to fight until he is defeated. This player will then be replaced by one of his teammates upon defeat. If he is strong, then he can accept challenge after challenge. For them to be victorious, however, all of the students on the opposite team have to be defeated.”

“Well, this is the best.” Hearing the last option, Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t help but resolve his heart. This was something he chose to do, so he should be fair and go alone. At worst, he would have to defeat opponent after opponent. He was still unaware, however, of the strength of those whom he would face.

The Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was indeed humongous. It took two and a half hours of running to travel from the registration office to the mixed district dormitories. Fei Si Qie La was surprised, even he was gasping for breath. Meanwhile Yin Zhu seemed to be fine as his complexion hadn’t changed

in the slightest.

“Here, room 623.” Fei Si Qie La pointed a finger at one of the bungalows. As expected, the sign that hung from the top had ‘Room 623’ written on it.

“Thank you, Fei Si Qie La,” Yin Zhu said gratefully.

Fei Si Qie La smiled and said, “No need for thanks. If you really want to thank me, then call me when the beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division are exercising, Idol!”

“Oh, okay.” Ye Yin Zhu didn’t understand the implicit meaning behind Fei Si Qie La’s words. He assumed that other people were naturally good natured, so he automatically agreed.

Fei Si Qie La left. Alone, Yin Zhu arrived in front of room 623 and used his key to open the door. Just as he was about to set foot in his future dormitory, he noticed there was already a petite figure bustling around inside.

The work-study dormitory was really small and pathetic. One person could barely squeeze into the bathroom. The so-called living room only allowed two people to properly sit. As for the bedroom, there was practically no open space with the two beds and a table crammed inside. The petite figure at this moment was bustling around, cleaning with very swift movements. His whole body was dressed in simple but neat grey clothing. His height approximately reached Yin Zhu’s chest. It was quite obvious that his grey clothing hadn’t been tailored, as it appeared to be somewhat loose. His hands were quite delicate, but they were very nimble. Room 623 was very small, so he had already cleaned the majority of the room.

“Hello,” Yin Zhu called out to the petite figure.

Upon hearing someone enter, the person inside turned around. A handsome yet pale face appeared in front of Yin Zhu. Long brown hair rested on his shoulders, and his pair of big eyes were brimming with cleverness. His body, however, did not have a healthy complexion. He appeared to be malnourished. The moment he spotted Yin Zhu, he completely blanked out and let the cleaning rag slip from his hand without noticing.

Thinking that he may have scared the other person, Yin Zhu hurriedly said, “I

am also living in this dorm. Are we roommates?”

“Eh?” The petite student reacted to his words and quickly replied, “Yes! It’s just a small room, but please come in.” He stooped down to pick up the cleaning rag from the floor. Through his clever eyes, a flash of astonishment could be seen.

Yin Zhu walked into the bedroom. He didn’t have any luggage, so he only placed his school uniform bundle down onto an empty bed. “Hello, I am called Yin Zhu.” He extended a hand towards the petite student during his greeting.

“Hello, just call me Sura for now. Ah! Your hand.” Sura gripped Yin Zhu’s hand and realized that he only had four fingers.

Yin Zhu said indifferently, “It’s nothing. I was naturally born like this. I only have eight fingers you see.” He stretched out his other hand and shook it in front of Sura as he spoke.

“Fortunately, it’s just the pinky finger. It doesn’t affect anything,” Sura smiled. “What division are you from?”

Ye Yin Zhu replied, “I am a part of the Divine Music division.”

“Divine Music division? You are a Divine Music mage?” Sura stared at Yin Zhu, dumbstruck.

Yin Zhu forced a smile and said, “Why are you so astonished that I’m in the Divine Music division?”

Sura laughed and answered, “I’m afraid it’s quite surprising to see a male studying to be a Divine Music mage. After all, it is a useless vocation.”

Yin Zhu laughed and replied, “You sure are honest. They all say that Divine Music mage is a trash mage. Oh wow, you’re really hardworking; this dormitory is swept clean. Is there anything I can help you with?”

Sura repeatedly waved his hand and said, “No thanks, I can do it myself. Look at how small this room is. When I came here, it was really filthy though. So how about you give me a silver coin as a form of payment.”

“A silver coin?” Ye Yin Zhu stared blankly at him.

Sura awkwardly laughed and said, “Yes! In this world, things require payment.

You see, I labored for many hours here making everything look neat.”

Ye Yin Zhu came to a realization. He looked at Sura’s malnourished appearance and didn’t comment. He retrieved a tenth of his money and handed a single gold coin over to Sura. “I only have this. I don’t have silver coins.”

Sura snatched the gold coin from Yin Zhu’s palm and then stared at it. His eyes were filled with intoxication and greed. “Of course, a gold coin is better. How about I maintain our dormitory’s sanitation from now on. This will be your payment to me for three months, okay? Furthermore, since you are also a work-study student, we cannot eat in the dining hall. We have to prepare food for ourselves in the dormitory. But don’t worry, I prepare wonderful meals. You just have to give me three gold coins a month. The institution’s dining hall costs ten gold coins a month, a price which it is certainly not worth.” He held three fingers up towards Yin Zhu as he spoke, his face full of excitement.

“Oh, okay.” Yin Zhu fished out three gold coins and handed them over to Sura . “Sura, what is your specialization?”

“Me? I am a part of the Assassin division, which is considered to be a dishonorable division specialization. You see, isn’t my build one that’s best suited towards assassination?”

“Assassination!” Yin Zhu couldn’t help but admire Sura with envy. He heard his grandfather say, ‘Assassin is a very difficult profession to practice. It is one that never defends and is always on the attack. Those in this profession rely on concealment and other special abilities to attain their target. Once mobilized, their opponent must kill them or be done for.’ Sura’s lithe, agile build suited this vocation awfully well.

“Then is your Assassin division participating in the Freshman Competition?”

Sura stared at Yin Zhu with amazement. “Are you joking? What kind of an assassin would want to be on stage with other people in a just and honorable competition? That’s not something for an assassin. Don’t tell me you want to participate.”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded. “Yes! I have already decided to participate.”

Chapter 9 – The Divine Music Division Treasure Trove (I)

“Praise Blue Dias! You don’t have a fever, do you?” Sura felt Ye Yin Zhu’s forehead. His hand was very small, but his fingers were quite long. The ice-cold touch gave Yin Zhu a very comfortable feeling.

“You don’t have faith in me either? Really, we Divine Music mages aren’t completely useless,” Yin Zhu said quite seriously. “Unfortunately, I lost my zither and space ring on the journey here, so I cannot play a song for you to hear.”

A strange light flashed through Sura’s eyes as he sighed regretfully, “That is indeed unfortunate. Well, you must be starving. How about I whip something up and let you have a taste of my cooking. I’ll prove to you that those three coins you spent were not wasted.” After saying those words, he quickly departed.

Sura’s movements were indeed swift. In just a moment’s time, lunch was ready. There were two dishes and some steamed rolls. The dish contained common green vegetables without even a speck of meat, but Yin Zhu was amazed to discover that Sura’s cooking was indeed fantastic. He made the common green vegetables smell, look, and taste phenomenal. As a child, he mostly ate bamboo shoots while growing up. He naturally preferred light food, but he wasn’t picky. As such, he ate the exceptionally aromatic food without complaint. And so, the Zither Emperor Ye Yin Zhu and the Night King Sura ate their first lunch together.

Ye Yin Zhu was completely unaware that the news of the Divine Music division’s participation in the Freshman Competition had already spread like wildfire. Everyone knew who he was. He had essentially become a celebrity in the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.

Yin Zhu crawled out of bed very early in the dawn of a new day, only to find that Sura had disappeared. The table had a plate of steamed rolls and a bowl of porridge on it. Clearly his breakfast had already been prepared. Even though it was just a simple breakfast, Yin Zhu still felt very warm inside. Sura might love money, but he was really adept at cleaning and cooking. Those three coins were well deserved.

He stretched his body and began slowly circulating Bamboo Dou Qi. Meanwhile, a cozy and carefree feeling started to spread through every meridian in his body. He had grown accustomed to meditating and cultivating every morning and night. Ye Yin Zhu grasped his right wrist and murmured to himself, “Fortunately, it is not lost.”

Yin Zhu realized during his chat with Sura yesterday that the red-white vertical striped school uniforms held some importance. For example, a pair of red-white vertical stripes represented a first-year student. Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts ran on a five year system. Of course it was compulsory to take an exam each term in order to enter the next grade. If you didn’t pass the exam, you would be required to remain and repeat the grade. Every student who graduated Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was at least an Advanced Level Yellow Rank.

The school uniform appeared to be made with quality materials. When Yin Zhu donned it, it made him feel valiant and formidable looking. The institution was quite humane. In addition to the school uniform yesterday, Yin Zhu also received a map of the campus. It was fortunate that he had this item because now he was able to easily find the location of the Divine Music division on his own.

Yin Zhu ran nonstop for close to an hour to get from the mixed district to the Divine Music division. He was used to exercising his body, so it didn’t bother him one bit.

The Divine Music division was located in a small and elegant looking four-story white villa—which was situated on unusually good terrain in the middle of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. To the left of the villa was a small lake approximately a thousand square meters large. Whereas the other side was filled with numerous plants. Only a few paths led to the main building from various directions. To the rear of the main building was the Divine Music division’s dormitory. The small white villa was extremely unique. Naturally, if you wanted to live here, you would have to pay bills for expenses and lodging. The price would also be extremely expensive.

“Yin Zhu, over here.” Xue Ling was leaning out of a second-story window and had seen Yin Zhu arriving in the distance.

According to the map in his hands, Yin Zhu could see that the spiritual magic education center was on the first story of this small four-story villa. The other three stories housed classrooms.

Yin Zhu's first impression upon entering the school building was that this was a palace, not a school. Gold and jade decorations hung in glorious splendor upon a large quantity of plants, which didn't appear to be tacky at all. It was not yet time to attend class, but the sounds of music could already be heard coming from the villa as instruments were played.

"It truly is a good location! No wonder it's so expensive," Yin Zhu said to himself.

"Expensive? Everyone knows that the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Art's tuition and education quality are equally high."

Yin Zhu turned around and saw that Dean Nina, who he had unknowingly called Grandmother yesterday, had arrived by his side.

"Hello, Grand... oh no, Dean Nina." Ye Yin Zhu had a good long-term memory and managed to correct himself before Nina flared up.

Nina hummed, "At this institution, you should pay attention to your words. I heard that you accepted the Wind division's Freshman Competition challenge. You want to participate in this year's Freshman Competition?"

Yin Zhu nodded.

"Are you sure?" Nina's eyes flashed with a certain radiance.

"Yes," Yin Zhu replied simply, watching as Nina's eyes revealed her astonishment.

"Yes? Why do you want to participate?"

"I am a Divine Music mage; naturally, I want to prove my music magic." Ye Yin Zhu gazed at Nina with clear eyes.

Nina lowered her head in thought. "Alright. If this is the case, then come with me." She led Ye Yin Zhu directly to the second floor and toward the first-year freshman classroom.

The huge classroom could hold up to 40 students, however, including Yin Zhu,

there were only 12 new students. Even with everyone present, the classroom appeared spacious and empty. Nina pointed a finger and made Yin Zhu find a seat.

In the end, Yin Zhu unhesitantly sat down beside Lan Xi, causing Lan Xi to blush. It wasn't because he held a favorable impression of Lan Xi, but rather because he and Lan Xi were alike since they both studied the zither, even if he didn't have his zithers...

Nina stood up on the platform and swept her gaze over the new faces. The entire classroom was silent.

Nina announced, "First of all, I am the Dean of the Divine Music division. On behalf of the Divine Music division, I welcome your arrival. Regardless of your reasons for choosing the Divine Music division, I hope that you can complete your studies for the sake of your future careers. Lessons will officially start in one week. I believe you all know the reason why: the school's annual Freshman Competition is in three days. During the next three days, the other divisions will be selecting their best candidates to participate in the competition. Our Divine Music division is the only exception. During yesterday's registration, however, student Ye Yin Zhu decided to represent our Divine Music division and announced that we are competing. Now I want to know who is willing to compete alongside him. If we do not have five participants, the Divine Music division will not even qualify for the competition."

"Dean Nina, I am willing." Xue Ling raised her hand. Soon after, Lan Xi also stated that she would participate.

A smile appeared on Dean Nina's face. "Good, but we are still short two people."

"Dean Nina, Senior Hai Yang said that she would participate in the competition with us yesterday. We only need one more person."

Nina looked somewhat amazed as she responded to Xue Ling, "Hai Yang really wanted to participate? Well, we are just short one person then."

This time, the classroom went silent. Nina didn't see anyone open their mouths and dully said, "Our Divine Music division has always been the best division in the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. I know, however,

that there are those who call us trash mages behind our backs. Since it was Student Ye Yin Zhu who proposed that we participate in the Freshman Competition this time, I want you to defend the Divine Music division's honor – regardless of the outcome. I, representing the Divine Music division, will gift a musical instrument and three hundred gold coins to each and every student who competes.”

Chapter 9 – The Divine Music Division Treasure Trove(II)

While listening to Nina’s speech, Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t help but feel exulted in his heart. Three hundred gold coins would be enough to pay for his expenses for a very long time. He would also receive an instrument. Before Yin Zhu could become too happy, however, he heard Nina say, “Ye Yin Zhu is excluded from this. He is a new student who, on the first day of school, clashed with a student from another division. Normally he wouldn’t be allowed to participate in the tournament as a form of punishment.”

“Grandma Nina, please don’t,” Yin Zhu cried out piteously. Without realizing, he had offended Nina again by opposing her words.

“Well, I have made my decision. If you cannot bring the Divine Music division to victory, then your tuition fee will be doubled.”

“Eh?” Only now did Yin Zhu find out just how terrifying Grandmother Nina could be. In the future, he had to be sure to watch his tongue around her. He kept silent with a bitter face.

Xue Ling lowered her head and giggled. She said, “Your dejected appearance is just too adorable.”

Ye Yin Zhu replied helplessly, “Men shouldn’t be called adorable.”

At this moment, a girl at the front of the classroom stood up and said, “Dean Nina, I will also participate.”

She was tall, beautiful, and appeared to be a bit older than Xue Ling and Lan Xi. Her temperament was prominent and slightly arrogant, giving her a noble aura. The most eye-catching part of her body were the two long legs peeking out from beneath her school uniform.

Lan Xi lowered her voice and whispered into Yin Zhu’s ear, “Her name is Kong Que, and her musical instrument is the pipa. Also, she seems to be at the Advanced Level Red Rank, making her more powerful than Xue Ling and me.”

“Just a moment ago, Grandmother Nina said our Divine Music division is the

best division in Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. This is not true. Don't all of the other divisions call us trash?"

Lan Xi giggled and replied, "That's true, but the claim is about our status, not our strength. During our Divine Music division's most valiant period, there were nine princesses—one from each country. Naturally, out of all the school's divisions, these princesses were the best. Thus the claim of being the best division is well-deserved."

"Ah! What about you? What's your position?"

Lan Xi said secretively, "You can't ask that. The identity of each and every Divine Music division student is kept highly confidential. After all, the mainland countries don't have a harmonious relationship with each other. Here everyone is merely a student."

Dean Nina clapped her hands together and said, "You may use the next few days before school officially begins to make arrangements and practice as you wish. As for you four, come with me."

Dean Nina led the participants into the Spiritual Magic education center—which was located on the first floor. This was an even larger classroom that was capable of holding up to a hundred people. The interior walls of the classroom were made up of a special material, which improved the room's acoustics.

"Good tools are required to do a good job. The reason I brought all of you here today was to help you choose instruments for yourselves. This will be the first time the Divine Music division participates in the Freshman Competition. We absolutely must not suffer a crushing defeat." Nina appeared to be somewhat pained as she said this. She sighed and continued, "Perhaps our Divine Music division shouldn't be classified under magical arts. Almost every student who comes here has a love for music. Due to the lack of offensive power, however, the students and teachers from the other divisions always seem to hate us, despite us being Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts' best division superficially. Although Yin Zhu's earlier incident was accidental, I still want to use this chance to let the other divisions know that what they assume about our division is wrong. All of you will be shouldering the glory of the Divine Music division."

Lan Xi hesitantly spoke up, “But Dean Nina... can we really win? Our music magic...”

Nina interrupted her and said indifferently, “Until now, almost everyone believed that the Divine Music division didn’t have a single redeeming feature. They are actually gravely mistaken. A genuine Divine Music mage is incomparably powerful. In fact, they are even the most powerful type of spiritual mage. It’s just that cultivating as a Divine Music mage is simply too challenging. Which is why only a few people are aware of this secret. On the mainland, a single Divine Music mage is capable of simultaneously defeating six other mages from different divisions. Aside from Spiritual mages, our Divine Music mages are the bane of all other divisions. Who can tell me what it means to be a Divine Music mage?”

Kong Que spoke up, “It means to imbue spiritual power inside music in order to resonate with other people.”

Nina said, “Correct. Through our music, spiritual power can be released on a large-scale. You can say that Divine Music mages are the only ones with magic of this nature. In addition, music is pervasive; it isn’t something that you can protect yourself from or resist. You can only stop it by moving out of the range of the emitted sounds. As long as you have enough spiritual power, you can rely on music to control your opponent’s mood. With this, there is no need compare ourselves to others. Under normal circumstances, the only ones able to even hold a candle to our level of spiritual strength are other Spiritual division mages. The mages from the other divisions don’t stand a chance. Ye Yin Zhu, tell me: what is the weakness of a Divine Music mage?”

“It lies in the duration of the musical performance. Generally speaking, a Divine Music mage must be at least a third of the way into the song before the music imbued with spiritual power can show its effects. Compared to the incantations of other division’s mages, which can be cast instantly, we are too slow.” This was the explanation Qin Shang gave to him. Yin Zhu remembered it awfully well.

His words surprised Nina. “One third? You spoke inaccurately. Unless you are Cyan Rank or higher, you need to be at least halfway through the song for the effects to show.” Yin Zhu was an exception to this, however, as he was cultivating the Pure Zither Heart. Because of this, he only needed to play a third

of a song on the zither for the effects to arise. But how was Nina to know this?

“At the Freshman Competition, the magic level of each division’s chosen candidates are generally between the Advanced Level Red Rank and the Primary Level Yellow Rank. Furthermore, the team’s leader cannot exceed the Advanced Level Yellow Rank. As a result, so long as you settle the issue with how long it takes to compose music, then under Hai Yang’s lead you’ll definitely have a chance. Even if the opposing mages are one to two levels above Hai Yang, they will still have a hard time surpassing her in spiritual power. Which is why you’ll need to work as a team to battle your opponents in the competition. You four need to hinder your opponents until Hai Yang’s music comes into effect. They must not be allowed to disturb Hai Yang.” Nina’s eyes flickered with light. She had evidently thought up these tactics long ago.

“No, I am not cannon fodder. As a noble Divine Music mage, I will never be cannon fodder.” Kong Que pridefully stuck out her large chest. Undeniably, she had the best figure among the new students.

Nina wrinkled her brows. “You really think you’re better than Hai Yang? Kong Que, if you cannot lead the team to victory and earn first place, then you need not participate in this Freshman Competition.” The intangible imposing aura she released made the arrogant Kong Que falter.

Nina walked behind the platform and stood in front of the magical Six-Point Star painting. She extended her right hand and pressed the center of the Six-Point Star while quietly reciting a rhythmic incantation. Ye Yin Zhu and the other four girls, however, were unable to make out what Nina was chanting. Intense cyan rays of light emerged from the Dean’s hand, rendering the Six-Point Star completely cyan in an instant. This was, to say the least, a Mid-Grade Magic Transmittance Emblem. Even if you searched the entirety of the mainland, you would still be hard pressed to find any Divine Music mages who had cultivated to such a level.

Chapter 9 – The Divine Music Division Treasure Trove (III)

Nina quietly faced the Six-Point Star as the melodious music echoed throughout the classroom. She watched as it opened and split into two halves, revealing an expansive passageway which led downwards. Yin Zhu and the other three astonishedly followed Nina and entered this unknown area.

The ceiling in this passageway was embedded with a magical milky white gem every 10 meters. These gems emitted a gentle radiance, enveloping the passageway in a soft light. The air here was still fresh and clear, which meant the gradual descent wasn't stifling in the slightest.

About a hundred meters up ahead, there was a simple carved door that blocked their path. Nina stopped walking and said faintly, "After you leave, forget everything you saw here today." She then began chanting an incantation similar to the one from before. No one in the group knew when it happened, but a hexagonal gem appeared in the palm of her hand. She inserted this gem into the door, sending a wave of violet light radiating outwards. Everyone aside from Nina stiffened and felt suffocated as the magic instantly fluctuated and rippled out.

The door opened inward, revealing a room that was approximately 50 square meters large. Though the wall with the entrance was normal, the other three walls in the room possessed several grids that were carved into them. It was unknown how they were created, but the carvings seemed to blend seamlessly into the wall they were a part of. Within the grids on the left wall were all kinds of musical instruments. Their ancient looks revealed their age. On the wall to the right were various magical items: robes, staves, armor, weapons, *etc.* The wall directly opposite to the entrance had the largest gridwork. Within these grids were gems, magical gems. There was a large fluctuation in energy over here, most likely due to the hundreds of magical gems. This place was simply a treasure trove. Unlike Yin Zhu, the girls were attracted to the gems almost immediately after entering through the door. Their eyes shined with a strange light. Even the arrogant Kong Que was unable to conceal her strong obsession.

Ye Yin Zhu spotted a zither over to the left and focused his gaze in its direction

—the Divine Music division’s only zither within the treasure trove. With a chestnut shell lacquer, broken streams of grains, and a lustrous glossy finish, it radiated a proud and aloof aura. Out of all the musical instruments laid out, it was seated right in the center, far from all the other instruments. It was like a monarch reigning over its feudal court.

Almost subconsciously, Yin Zhu forgot the others’ existences and began walking step by step towards that zither. It seemed to pull at his heart. Once he drew closer, he could clearly see the zither flicker with a faint rays of light. He stared at the pearl inlay, the 13 zither crests which resembled small moons, and the zither itself which rested harmoniously upon a pillow.

Within the Divine Music division’s treasure-trove there was another person who was stunned by what they saw, it was Nina. After leading the four students here, she turned around for just a moment and found Ye Yin Zhu walking uncontrollably towards the zither with an infatuated gaze. At this moment, her mind froze. An intense feeling of compassion instantly arose from deep within her heart and spread through every inch of her body. Before, Dean Nina brimmed with an imposing aura, but at this moment her body could only tremble.

“Truly... you truly do resemble him greatly. You even arrived here in the exact same way he had. Neither of you had been enchanted by the gems, your eyes only fell on the zither.”

Nina’s figure appeared in front of Ye Yin Zhu, obstructing his vision. Having lost sight of the zither, Ye Yin Zhu woke from the infatuation that had clouded his mind. He looked at Nina with a dull gaze.

A long, violet xiao fell into her hands. It emitted a faint and chilling aura. Nina mumbled to herself.

“Gather the long strands of escaping fragrance as shadowless clouds float. The bird chirps upon a slender finger.

Gazing at the moon from the other end of the world, thoughts are naturally contaminated with the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance. The heart is unable to forget about this, and even harder to forget about is perhaps the wine of sorrow.

The frost of the bright moon piled up, as if collecting thoughts of yearning on

the brows and heart.

Tonight, this xiao returns.

A cold, violet jade xiao. A figure stands behind and to the side of this string of jade pearls. Now will you come?

When the lonely starlight is woven together and the song comes to an end, I wave farewell and keep watch beside the zither under the moon. You know, I've been waiting a long time, an extremely long time..."

Wu——, the sorrowful sound of the xiao, filled with resentment and endless yearning, echoed and broke the silence. Numerous cyan rays of light spiraled around Nina, instantly illuminating the entirety of the hidden treasure trove. During all this, tears streamed silently down Nina's face.

At almost the same time, the three girls who had been obsessed with the gems fell over. Their eyes brimmed with pain as tears flowed uncontrollably down their faces. Their hearts were torn to shreds by the sorrowful xiao music.

Ye Yin Zhu's situation wasn't much better. The distance between his and Nina's spiritual power was simply too great. In addition, he was close enough to her that he could understand her current mood. There were no words to describe the pain that flooded his heart as his complexion paled. Luckily, his clear Pure Zither Heart supported him, so he didn't completely lose himself in the xiao music.

He violently bit the tip of his tongue, causing the chaos that enveloped his mind to clear somewhat. Faint yellow rays of light enveloped his body. Yin Zhu, as if driven by a strange illusion, took a large step forward and moved past Nina. A large dark red radiance blazed as all eight of his fingers simultaneously stroked the seven strings that glittered with a cyan light. A string of bright, clear zither notes blended together like a maelstrom, leaving behind a lingering charm. He took advantage of the xiao's momentary silence and forcibly interrupted the music.

Nina realized what she had just done when her mood went out of control. She unexpectedly used asonic boom, possibly traumatizing those children and dealing troublesome spiritual wounds.

A sonic boom was a brief explosion of sound waves with penetrative power. It was the equivalent to the instantaneous magic that the other divisions' mages used, and it was something a Divine Music mage could fully use after reaching Green Rank. Yin Zhu's actual strength was still one rank away from being able to use sonic boom.

After hurriedly putting away the cold, violet jade xiao in her hand, Nina quickly walked towards the three girls. She faintly released waves of spiritual power as she touched each of them to examine their condition.

The spiritual power foundations of all three girls were still alright. It appeared that Ye Yin Zhu had interrupted her sonic boom just in time. Nina's expression relaxed significantly as a result. Although they received some spiritual damage, it was nothing severe. To recover, all they would need was some rest.

Nina's gaze sharpened as she abruptly turned her body to face Ye Yin Zhu. "Ye Yin Zhu, tell me, how are you related to Qin Shang?"

"Eh?" Yin Zhu's shaken spiritual power had just recovered, so he didn't respond for a moment.

"You don't need to hide it. It would've been absolutely impossible for you to resist my Cyan Rank spiritual power unless you cultivated the same zither magic as Qin Shang to the Red Rank. No wonder you weren't influenced by Hai Yang's guzheng song when you performed with her that day. You are just like that scoundrel in the fact that your Red Rank strength is not applicable to the three-level, nine-rank system."

"Grandfather Qin is no scoundrel," Ye Yin Zhu said angrily. He unconsciously embraced the guqin and held it close to his chest. To a zither mage, the guqin was like his flesh and blood; he was unwilling to part with it.

"Grandfather Qin? You are his grandson?" Nina's complexion became deathly pale as her body swayed. She seemed as though she would collapse at any second.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, "No, I am Grandfather Qin's disciple."

Nina stared blankly, her complexion seemed to have slightly improved. "Did he tell you to find me when you came here?"

Ye Yin Zhu recalled his departure from Desolate Jade Sea and what Qin Shang told him. He then replied, “Yes! Grandfather Qin gave me a letter to give to the Dean of the Divine Music division, whom I believe is you.”

“Letter?” Nina impatiently asked. She was standing only a few steps away from Yin Zhu, her breathing erratic.

“Lost.”

“What? How could this be?”

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Chapter 9 – The Divine Music Division Treasure Trove (IV)

At that moment, Yin Zhu explained in detail how he had good intentions in being charitable to a beggar, only to have his space ring stolen.

“Hoodlum. Let me know who that thief is; I’ll hack him to death,” Nina went on a rambling tirade. Recalling how she released a sonic boom just a moment ago, Ye Yin Zhu increasingly realized why the other female students were very afraid of her.

Nina’s mood gradually calmed down after a while. She glared fiercely at Yin Zhu and said, “After all these years, he didn’t come look for me. Instead, you show up. What are his intentions? I was under the impression that he had already forgotten about me. What did he want you to do? Did you come in order to obtain the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither?”

Ye Yin Zhu, at a loss, shook his head and said, “I don’t know. Grandfather Qin only told me to deliver that letter when I arrived. He didn’t say what he was planning. Maybe it’s for me to become a student.”

“You jest. Can’t he teach you himself? With his level of skill as a Divine Music mage, he actually wanted you to come study here?”

Nina’s expression changed, her emotions violently fluctuating. She stared at the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither still in Yin Zhu’s hand and didn’t speak for a long time.

“Grandmother Nina, are you alright?” Yin Zhu probingly asked. “Oh, sorry. Dean Nina, I incorrectly addressed you again.”

Unusually, Nina didn’t flip out because he called her grandmother this time. Instead, her aged face blushed. “You can call me Grandmother Nina from now on. Is, is he okay?”

“Excellent! It’s just that sometimes Grandfather Qin can be lost in thought. The majority of the time, however, he and I are together as he teaches me to play the zither.”

“Has he gotten married yet?” Nina asked, appearing somewhat bashful.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and replied, “I don’t know, but for more than a decade, Grandfather Qin has always been alone.”

Nina let out a sigh of relief, but she caught herself and gnashed her teeth. “This scoundrel didn’t marry and didn’t come to find me. Am I really that scary? That scoundrel, he really is a wretched man. Tell me, where is he?”

“Grandmother Nina, I cannot tell you. When I left, Grandfather Qin specifically warned me repeatedly not to speak of his whereabouts.”

The anger that was visible on Nina’s face disappeared and was replaced by a smiling expression. “Yin Zhu, obedient child, tell Grandmother Nina where your master is! As long as you tell me, grandmother will give you the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither, okay? This is currently the best zither in the world. It is not lacking at all when compared to the other zithers you have lost. Originally your master left me because I didn’t give it to him.”

Ye Yin Zhu glanced reluctantly at the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance on his chest and took a deep breath. He handed the zither to Nina, “Then I don’t want it anymore. I can’t go against Grandfather Qin.”

“You...it looks like that bastard you call a teacher went and made a little miscreant like yourself in his image.” Nina angrily grabbed the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance. Suddenly, a divine light flashed through her mind. The anger in her eyes immediately faded away. ‘Very well, Qin Shang. You didn’t come and try to find me? Fine! Your disciple is here. If you don’t show up, I’ll hold him here, and then we’ll see if you come or not.’

Nina’s thoughts became clear, her mind active. Eyeing Yin Zhu from top to bottom, she asked, “What level is your zither magic cultivation? Speak freely, for I am your Grandfather Qin’s old friend and thus know almost all his secrets. Your cultivation rank differs from that of a common Divine Music mage. As yours is divided into three realms with nine ranks in each realm. Correct?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded. Because Nina recognized his capability and was previously entangled with Qin Shang, he already believed Grandmother Nina. He said, “Grandfather Qin told me I have nearly entered the First Rank of the Courageous Zither Heart Realm. I just need the opportunity and time to break through the bottleneck.”

‘You’ve almost broken through to the First Rank of the Courageous Zither Heart Realm already?’ Nina’s heart rate sped up. “So, you have cultivated to the equivalence of an Advanced Level Yellow Rank mage then?”

“It seems like it.”

“Haha, haha haha. This really is fantastic. The Heavens have given me such a good opportunity; I mustn’t let it get away. Humph! Those old guys from the other divisions, this time I’ll let you see what a genuine Divine Music mage can do. This Freshman Competition will inevitably be shaken up by our Divine Music division. Hold this.” She placed the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance into Yin Zhu’s hand once she stopped talking.

“How much has your grandfather taught you in regard to his skills? Nina asked.

“I don’t know. Grandfather Qin told me that I am still far from ready. Grandmother Nina, your mood changes too much. It’s not good for Divine Music mages to be like this.”

Nina groaned and said, “I do not need you to take care of me. Hilarious! Yesterday that Wind division’s little girl unexpectedly provoked you without knowing that you are a true genius. You reached the Advanced Level Yellow Rank at the age of 16-17. In the competition you will have equal ranks. Ye Yin Zhu, you must listen to me. No matter what, for this next Freshman Competition, you must lead the Divine Music division to a good ranking. If you can enter the finals, then I will use my position as the Divine Music division Dean to find you scholarships, exempting you from all tuition fees. I will also hand you back this Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither for you to use.

“Really? Fantastic!” Ye Yin Zhu rejoiced. His biggest issues were his lack of money and zithers. With just this, he would get both.

Nina glanced at him and said, “Don’t think that this will be easy. You shouldn’t forget that Divine Music mages don’t have much offensive power. Just follow my

previous plan, except this time, I'm switching the main assault from Hai Yang to you."

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, "No, this is no good. I can't use a girl as my shield. Grandmother Nina, I think I can manage it on my own."

"How ambitious. You deserve to be called Qin Shang's disciple. But here, you have to listen to me. With you, a new variable, I need to rethink my tactics for the competition. Let's talk about it later. Oh right, don't let anyone know that your zither magic is different from the common Divine Music mage. The more other people who scorn you, the better.

"Oh, okay," Yin Zhu agreed.

Nina sighed and said, "In the future, if you have any trouble in the institution, come find me. Since your master gave you a letter to hand me, I might as well look after you. Come, follow me." She led Ye Yin Zhu over to the right shelf of the hidden treasure trove, then removed the topmost white magic robe and placed it into Ye Yin Zhu's arms. Afterwards, he followed her to the shelves with gems, where she took out a bracelet and necklace and gave them to him.

"You leave first. I still need to help these girls choose their own equipment. I am giving these three items to you, so don't lose them! The magic robe is called Divine Celestial Protection Robe; it's an elf-made magic article. It brings out the light element's defensive ability and has a self-cleaning water magic feature. It will never be tainted with filth. The light element protects you depending on how much spiritual power you release; different amounts have different ranges. It can be used thrice a day. Regardless of whether it is a physical attack or a magical attack, it provides good resistance against everything."

"Grandmother Nina, these are too precious." From the waves of elemental magic, Ye Yin Zhu knew they were of excellent quality.

"Again, I am not giving them to you. I'm merely permitting you to use them in the Freshman Competition to support the Divine Music division, nothing more. The necklace is called Spirit Guardian; it specializes in guarding against spiritual power, benefitting you in the event that you come across a spiritual magic attack. It can also protect your mind, preventing you from becoming an idiot. This Life Guardian Bracelet can be used once a day to summon an absolute

defense. Although it is an absolute defense, if the opponent's attack surpasses the Violet Rank, it is still very dangerous. Go ponder over these things by yourself."

Ye Yin Zhu listened to Nina and departed. Staring at the back of his retreating figure, Nina's eyes manifested glistening teardrops once more. "Big scoundrel, you didn't want these three divine protection items back then, so I gave them to your disciple. Did you know? At that time, I was preparing to send these as a token of my love..."

Chapter 10 – The First Match of the Freshman Competition (I)

Night fell. Qin Shang was seated in front of the bamboo house within the Desolate Jade Sea. He was surrounded by an air of melancholy. On the table before him sat a single guqin.

“Yin Zhu ought to have arrived in Milan by now. I wonder if you saw him? Nina, oh Nina, you know I want to see you, but alas, I cannot. My body must bear too much, too much.

Water flows from the heavens, pleasant to the ear in the pure, clear night.
An elegant memory emerges, not to be plucked by the string.

The sound of the music flows into an ode, asking only for you to listen closely.

A cherished desire – fortune cannot make up for the past mistakes of my zither and your xiao in this life. To this, beautiful fated music has been left behind.

Slowly you come, embracing your favorite instrument. The night becomes even more clear and beautiful.

Under an expanse of light, you are one with the moon.

I take comfort in both this song and the letter I sent you, despite the distance between us. I am worried. But inside, my heart is resolute.” ¹

As the zither cried out, teardrops sprinkled down. Although it was not the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither, at this very moment, when both of Qin Shang’s hands pressed down on the strings, his thoughts were immersed in past recollections.

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Yin Zhu didn’t put on the the Divine Celestial Protection Robe, but he tightly strapped on the Life Guardian Bracelet. Though Nina appeared to be quite vicious upon learning that he was Grandfather Qin’s disciple today, it was clear that she was feeling a deep sorrow. He was also able to sense and understand Grandmother Nina’s longing for Grandfather Qin. Perhaps it was because of this

that he was having a sort of familial feeling.

The silver Spirit Guardian necklace was made of an unknown type of metal and had a silver self-absorption gem embedded within the pendant. When Ye Yin Zhu wore it around his neck, the gem unexpectedly started to undulate. It absorbed his spiritual power, and then fused it together with a strange element. His mind became even sharper as his intangible spiritual energy compressed and concentrated.

The Life Guardian Bracelet, which was tightly fitted against his wrist, was approximately an inch wide. It had a total of eight light-green gems embedded in the cyan colored metal. These gems sent a soft energy flowing through Yin Zhu's heart and arteries, producing a warm sensation. All three magical items he had received were defense related. Yin Zhu was unfamiliar with them, but even he could sense just how precious they were.

"Hey, you've been sitting there for at least half a day now, neither sleeping nor meditating. What are you thinking about?" Sura laid down on his own bed and inquisitively asked Yin Zhu.

"Oh!" Yin Zhu was roused from his deep thoughts. "It's nothing. Anyways, there's still two days before the Freshman Competition begins."

Pfff. Sura giggled and smiled. His two big eyes shone bright in the darkness of the night. "You really still plan on participating!? You don't have any hope of winning you know; your Divine Music division doesn't stand a chance. Rest early tonight, I think it would be better if you carefully consider your future prospects."

Those two days passed by very quickly. Both days Nina had called the five competitors together and thoroughly explained the tactics they were to employ during the competition. Apparently she had already forgotten about that matter from the other day, as she wasn't paying much attention to Ye Yin Zhu anymore. Though she still looked quite strict on the outside, whenever her gaze passed over Yin Zhu, however, she would appear to soften somewhat.

A golden sun shone down upon the glorious earth. Beneath the shining sun, numerous plants of all shapes and sizes filled the air in the Milan Institute for Magic and Martial Arts with the freshest fragrance. Milan was bustling with

excitement. Though the institution was located towards the northern end of the mainland, it was summer, and thus the temperature was still quite cozy.

Excluding the small center region of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, more than two-thirds of the area were division specialization training fields. After all, regardless of whether they cultivated magic or martial arts, all divisions needed ample space to practice. Today, every training field was bustling with noise and excitement. This was because the competition between these ten divisions would determine who advanced in the Freshman Competition.

The bulk of the students, and even a good majority of the upperclassmen, had gathered around the large training field to watch the competition. The most popular attraction today was the match between the Divine Music division and the Water division over on training field six.

The Divine Music division's training field was also the place where the new students took their entrance exam—the auditorium. Clearly they couldn't host the match there. Thus, after the lottery determined the lineup, they had no choice but to use the Water division's training field to carry out the match.

Training field six has an area of around a thousand square meters. Taking into consideration the amount of space needed by each field of magic to practice, this wasn't considered to be a very large area. Because this was the Water division's field, the majority of the spectators would normally be from their division. At this moment, however, training field six was surrounded by nearly six thousand people—ten times the amount of students in the Water division. The reason why was simple: this was the first time since the establishment of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, that the Divine Music division participated in the Freshman Competition. In addition, the ladies of the Divine Music division were renowned for being both noble and beautiful. It was common knowledge that the overwhelming majority of those who chose to cultivate as a Divine Music mage came from some sort of nobility. They were the only ones who didn't need to contemplate a future career. Who could say that a princesses from each of the mainland's countries weren't among them?

“Divine Music division! Divine Music division! Divine Music division!” Loud, joyous shouts rose and fell like waves, echoing out. Even some of the Water

division students were cheering for the Divine Music division. No one thought they would emerge victorious, but they still came to stare at the Divine Music division's numerous beautiful ladies. It was something all the male students thirsted for. If they could by chance impress these beautiful ladies, then it could be an enormous blessing.

Normally the area for spectators on training field six would have twenty seats reserved for the Water division teachers, who would watch the students train. Now, however, the Water division and Divine Music division teachers shared this space to watch the fight. Dean Nina sat in the center with the Dean of the Water division, Intermediate Level Indigo rank Mage Scholar Wa Ge Lei. As for the other teachers, they took seats on either side. Fortunately, the Water division teachers were all women, so they wouldn't harass the beautiful teachers from the Divine Music division. One must know that the Divine Music division's teachers were as well-known for their beauty as their students.

"Dean Nina, I was still under the impression that the Divine Music division's participation in the competition was merely a rumor. I didn't expect for it to be true." Wa Ge Lei was a wizened old man. He stared at Nina with an expression that was like a smile, yet not a smile.

Nina didn't even glance at him, her gaze was focused only on the stage and the two groups of students. She responded indifferently, "Our Divine Music division is Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts's best division. Why shouldn't we participate? Instead of thinking about whether we would be participating or not, you should've been thinking about how to prevent your Water division from padding the bottom of this competition once again."

"You..." Wa Ge Lei was extremely embarrassed. Water division magic was always considered to be a relatively weak magic. It wasn't as good as the Light division in healing, and you needed to reach Green Rank or higher in order to truly bring out the offensive magic's power. Which was why in the past they, for the most part, ended up padding the bottom ranks in the Freshman Competition. The great majority of students who chose the Water division were from financially-strapped backgrounds. The Water division had the most work-study student mages. This meant that the students didn't have the financial resources to purchase High-Grade magical items.

“Since all of the new students are allowed to compete in the Freshman Competition, it’s only natural for the Divine Music division to participate as well.” An aged voice sounded from behind them. Nina and Wa Ge Lei turned around simultaneously, shocked. They discovered an elderly man who was wearing a faint gold robe behind them. Neither of the deans knew when he had arrived.

Though Nina had been rather haughty earlier, upon seeing this individual she promptly rose up. She deferentially greeted him, “President Ferguson, hello.”

Wa Ge Lei astonishedly asked, “President Ferguson, why have you come here?”

Ferguson let out a slight laugh. The wrinkles on his face were so deep they could hold beans. “The Divine Music division has come out to fight. It’s only natural that I would want to come and cheer Dean Nina on. I think there must be some remarkable students amongst the Divine Music division’s freshmen this year.” He understood Nina better than Wa Ge Lei. Nina was well-known throughout the entire Milan Empire for her pride. If she didn’t have confidence in her students, then the Divine Music division wouldn’t be standing on the training field today since they lacked offensive power.

1. (Some of this poem was loosely translated. 流水悠然天(Leisurely from the sky, water flows) refers to water flowing down from a high cliff as if falling from the sky. 玲珑知意下, 不语一弦声 (the second line) can be interpreted as the sound of water bringing out an insightful or elegant thought that made Qin Shang remember his time with Nina. In 泠泠的音韵化作诗章, 诉与你, 细细地听 (the third line), 泠泠 refers to the sound of the music, not specifically the sound of the water. This describes a duality between reality and Qin Shang’s memories. In 一段心愿, 宿命不让琴箫今生错过, 留下至美的音缘, 于斯 (the fourth line) 宿命 is translated to fortune instead of karma to better describe the dual meaning of optimism and sadness. In 姗姗而来, 抱着你喜欢的琴, 今夜更加清丽 (the fifth line), 抱着你喜欢的琴 directly translates to holding the instrument you like. 琴(qín) is a pun for Qin Shang’s surname: 秦(qín). 清 translates to clear, but means clear like water, which also emphasizes a

duality of water and the night in reality and the night from his memories. In 千里清辉下, 与月相惜 (the sixth line), 千里清辉下 is an idiom for the distance to the moon. In the final line, 抚一曲遥相寄, 切切, 里面我心于坚, 寄 describes the letter that he gave to Ye Yin Zhu to give to her. 抚一曲遥相寄 could also describe that Qin Shang sent her his hope (Ye Yin Zhu).)

Chapter 10 – The First Match of the Freshman Competition (II)

Wa Ge Lei gave his seat to Ferguson. He waved towards the teachers of the two divisions who were still standing. “Everyone, take a seat. The competition’s about to begin.”

On the expansive thousand meter training field area, the Divine Music division and the Water division’s ten competitors had already gathered at the center of the field. Hai Yang stood in the very back and didn’t attract attention at all, her black hair still concealing half of her face like before. Lan Xi, Xue Ling, and Kong Que were all rare beautiful ladies so they naturally caught the attention of the thousand spectating students. The true focus, however, was not the girls; rather, it was the fifth competitor of the Divine Music division who stood in the center – Ye Yin Zhu.

The spotlessly white Divine Celestial Protective Robe didn’t even have a speck of dirt contaminating it. The protective robe’s collar and cuffs were edged gold, and on the left side of his chest was a crescent moon that appeared as if it was a white gem emitting gentle rays of light. The manufacturing of this item wasn’t excessively decorative, making the protective robe filled with an air of nobility and elegance.

Long, soft black hair rested over his shoulders. A graceful aura accentuated his handsome face. He wore the Divine Celestial Protective Robe only upon entering the training field, replacing his ordinary clothing. Every movement he made was filled with an air of aristocracy. His elegance did not have a single impurity tainting it. Above all else, his two deep, clear black eyes appeared as if they could look deep into a person’s heart. With a straight stature, his slender build made the four females by his side become the best ornaments.

Standing in the center of the training field were the generals leading their respective divisions. Who would have thought that the Divine Music division general would not be second-year Hai Yang, but rather the person who accepted Wind division’s genius Luo Lan’s challenge, Ye Yin Zhu.

The five representatives of the Water division consisted of two males and three females. The three female students looked mediocre in comparison to the Divine Music division's females. These females' gazes were completely captured by the graceful Yin Zhu standing in the front. You could even distinctly see the pink luster they were emitting. Like how men liked beautiful women, women liked handsome men.

"Hello, I am Water division second-year Student Karachi, the Water division Freshman Competition general. Please give advice." Looking at the Divine Music competitors, Karachi was really envious. It wasn't a big deal that the Divine Music division had beautiful girls. After all these years, however, the Divine Music division's first male student was unexpectedly very handsome. Yin Zhu's limelight suppressed his. Groaning, he thought, 'Just wait. I'll make you acknowledge my strength.'

Karachi was half a head shorter than Yin Zhu. Even though his appearance was alright, he also possessed the common failing of mages: his complexion was too pale. Yin Zhu in comparison was clearly not on the same level with his excellent tan.

Yin Zhu nodded his head politely and said, "Hello. I am the Divine Music division general, first-year Student Ye Yin Zhu. Please give advice."

Karachi pushed down the envy in his heart. He smiled and replied, "Has your precious division decided upon a competition style?" According to the Freshman Competition regulations, due to the high respect women are given, the side with the majority of female students had the right to choose the competition style. In the event that the amount of female students were equal on both sides, they would decide by drawing lots. There was no need to ask; out of all the physical and magical districts' division specializations, the Divine Music division was the one and only division that could produce four female student competitors. This was an advantage of the Divine Music division.

"Team battle," Ye Yin Zhu succinctly and powerfully answered.

Karachi agreed, and both sides fell back simultaneously. A teacher of the Institution's Educational Administration became the competition's referee. Once both sides determined upon a competition style, the referee loudly declared,

“Match start!”

The six points surrounding training field six lit up at the same time. A gigantic six-pointed star appeared in midair. A milky white radiance formed an enormous, transparent light shield that enveloped the whole training field. Using High-Grade Magic Stones to complete the defensive shield enveloping the training field, only the rich and imposing Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts could do something like this. This defensive shield consisted of every kind of element, making it able to endure Indigo Rank or lower magic bombardments. As long as there was enough energy among the mages maintaining it, it would continue to work.

Taking out a wooden table and a wooden chair, Hai Yang sat down, her guzheng already resting on top of the flat table. Ye Yin Zhu and the other three students stood five meters in front of Hai Yang, forming an arc to faintly protect Hai Yang behind them.

“Ye Yin Zhu, we are going to start,” Karachi shouted loudly across the field. He was not anxious a bit about starting to attack. As far as Divine Music mages were concerned, they still somewhat realized that if they could not execute half of a musical composition, the formidable power of the Divine Music mage’s musical composition would not emerge. During such a long wait, even the Water division’s forbidden spells could be executed.

In response to Karachi, a note resounded powerfully, the guzheng’s cry trembling like a dragon’s roar. Hai Yang had already begun playing.

Orange rays of light was accompanied by a clear splash of jade, the similar musical composition rippling out and dispersing in all directions. This name of this guzheng song was << Dream >>. Gentleness and grief accompanied the guzheng song. It was as if Hai Yang was expressing her mood.

Karachi’s eyes suddenly flashed with expression. “Good, Advanced Level Orange Rank, you deserve to be called the Divine Music division’s number one genius. What a pity...”

Ye Yin Zhu did not know what Karachi meant when he said it was a pity because at that moment, the other side began to attack. From the hundred first-year new students, these four students were naturally well-known in order to

have been chosen to compete. Their bodies simultaneously released varying shades of orange. Unexpectedly, they were all Intermediate mages. The muffled chanting of spells rose in volume as they begun to cast magic.

Karachi didn't chant. His body released a faint yellow radiance instead – Primary Level Yellow Rank. In the blink of an eye, he sent a 'Red Water Arrow' straight towards Yin Zhu's chest. As the general, Karachi sent out an attack to feel out the opponent. As he had reached the Yellow Rank, he could definitely cast Red Rank magic instantly.

Nina explained how they should win the first match by using these words – 'win because of a surprise move.' The Divine Music division had not appeared in the institution's Freshman Competition before, so no one was familiar with Divine Music mages. This was their greatest advantage.

Ye Yin Zhu stepped to the left and avoided the arrow despite its quick speed. He made it seem as if it was a careless movement made to avoid it just in time. The Red Water Arrow splashed against the defensive shield protecting the training field, making it slightly ripple.

Karachi stared blankly. It was rare for an attack to be dodged during a confrontation between mages. He didn't expect Yin Zhu to deal with his attack like this. Just now, he found something to be amiss. According to his original plan, his four companions' wave magic should have already been released, but their incantation was still not complete. Why was it not complete? It was the guzheng music, Karachi came to realize. His complexion became grim. He unexpectedly discovered that Divine Music mages were not devoid of redeeming qualities. Hai Yang's guzheng song was already beginning to be effective.

Karachi decided they must block him. While very difficult, the Divine Music division must replace the Water division at the bottom; he could not abandon this opportunity. In the blink of an eye, he sent out another water arrow towards Yin Zhu and the other three, aiming it at the cracks between the four students. His target was Hai Yang. Karachi believed that if he interrupted the guzheng song, they could win.

Kong Que disdainfully said, "As it turns out, it's only at this level!" Waving her right hand, the ring on her middle finger released intensely strong rays of light.

An orange shield of light expanded in a flash and shielded the four people in the front. The Red Rank Water Arrow confronted the Orange Rank defense and was completely blocked, producing an intense sound at impact.

At this moment, the Water division's other four students finally completed their magic. 'Roaring Wave' magically summoned a tremendous wave. If it was only a single Orange Rank mage who casted the spell, its power would naturally be limited, but four mages casting simultaneously created an extremely impressive wave. The four-layered, tremendous orange wave roared powerfully as it advanced forward and attacked the Divine Music division party.

Karachi raised the magic staff in his hand. The bright blue gem atop it began emitting soft halos of light. He had already begun chanting. An unknown audience member yelled out, "Water Spirit Blessing!"

Chapter 10 – The First Match of the Freshman Competition (III)

Naturally, an Orange Rank defense wouldn't be capable of defending against a Roaring Wave powered by four people. Lan Xi and Xue Ling simultaneously extended their right hands and released the exact same orange shield of light as Kong Que, creating a three-layered defense.

When the Roaring Wave collided with the three-layered defense, a magical orange colored tornado suddenly formed out on the training field. Even with the additional support, the defensive shield was still unable to completely ward off the wave.

Over in the spectator's grandstand, Wa Ge Lei snorted, "How can magical equipment alone stop a magic spell? Even the more powerful magical equipment can only grant the wielder abilities like allowing them to release magic that's one level higher than their own power. For example, Karachi's Water Spirit Blessing can reduce the cast time of Water division magic by thirty percent. How could those small fry from the Divine Music division possibly resist this?"

Nina sneered, "You should just watch. I pity the impoverished Water division, who are forever incapable of knowing the true power of magical equipment." She already knew that Wa Ge Lei had given his own magical staff, the Water Spirit Blessing, to Karachi for use in this tournament. Despite Wa Ge Lei bringing out item after item to pressure them, Nina didn't appear to be worried in the slightest. After all, the other divisions couldn't compare to the wealth of the Divine Music division, which often had student from noble backgrounds—like princesses. The number one division's fame didn't come from nothing.

Both the four-layered Roaring Wave and the three-layered magical shield disappeared simultaneously. All magical equipment required a certain amount of spiritual power to operate, and the ones used by the Divine Music division were no exception. Using their magical equipment to help reinforce the Orange Rank defense had used up a lot of spiritual power from the Primary Level Red Rank mages Xue Ling and Lan Xi, which had caused their complexions to pale from overexertion.

With Roaring Wave neutralizing the sound of the guzheng, thereby removing

its influence, and with the help of Water Spirit Blessing, Karachi was able to finish casting his spell and strengthen it with the help of his companions' magic. A three-meter long water dragon emerged out of thin air, roaring and flickering with a yellow luster as it advanced towards the Divine Music division party. Having finished casting the spell, Karachi's complexion became even more pale. The influence of the guzheng music had been too great, forcing Karachi to use his most powerful spell, Cry of the Water Dragon.

The spectators watching the battle couldn't help but cry out in alarm as they watched this spectacle. Even they could tell that if the Divine Music division's students were to try and defend with another magical shield, it would be hopeless. After all, it was simply impossible for an Orange Rank defense to hold up against a Yellow Rank spell. The outcome of the match was already determined in their eyes.

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu smiled serenely as he and the three girls retreated to Hai Yang's side. It was then that the Divine Celestial Protective Robe on his body released numerous milky white rays of light as it expanded almost instantaneously to a radius of ten meters, completely enshrouding the five students.

Boom—, the water dragon's might was not something to be underestimated, but when it collided with the shield, the audience couldn't help but cry out in surprise. The water dragon had smashed and scattered upon impact, creating only a tiny crack in the milky white shield.

"Impossible." Seeing this, Wa Ge Lei's eyes widened as he sprung up from his seat in the spectator's grandstand. Ye Yin Zhu's body had clearly been releasing a magical radiance at the Red Rank!

Ferguson stared knowingly at Nina with a profound look in his eyes. "Divine Celestial Protection. Even I must envy the Divine Music division."

By now, the song << Dream >> was already halfway through, and the battle had reached its climax. Neither Karachi nor his four companions casted another spell due to <<Dream>>'s influence. Karachi's juniors were already fast asleep, and he himself was too drowsy to chant another line of incantation. Naturally, << Dream >> hadn't influenced Yin Zhu or his companions as Divine Music mages

could choose who their special skills affect.

“As the students from the Water division have lost the ability to resist, the Divine Music division wins!” The referee announced. Beating your opponents to a pulp wasn’t the only way to win a match like this. As long as a team could make it so that their opponents can’t fight back, such as by putting them to sleep, they would win.

“Ye—, we won! We really won!” Xue Ling excitedly bounced up and down. She wrapped her hands around Yin Zhu’s neck and passionately kissed him on the cheek, making Yin Zhu blush in embarrassment. He didn’t know how to react.

Lan Xi managed to show more restraint, but even so, a gentle smile still graced her face.

Kong Que arrogantly stuck out her ample chest and said loftily, “The Divine Music division is the most powerful division.”

Hai Yang’s reaction was the dullest. She played << Dream >> until the end, and then she just walked off the training field, guzheng in hand.

During this whole ordeal, the entire audience had been absolutely silent.

When the match began, no one expected the Divine Music division to actually win. This was because matches between mages in the past would normally consist of mutual magical bombardment. The party that exhausted their magical power first would lose the match. It was simply a contest of strength. Today’s match, however, had reached a quick conclusion. The Water division students couldn’t even pull off a successful magic attack before being defeated by the Divine Music division. At this very moment, numerous students were already becoming suspicious of the useless Divine Music division.

Wa Ge Lei sluggishly stood up. “Impossible, this can’t be. It should be impossible for a Red Rank student to obstruct the Cry of the Water Dragon, even if he’s wearing the Divine Celestial Protection.” He had originally been quite happy after hearing that the Divine Music division was partaking in the competition, as he believed it would finally bring the Water division out from last place in the rankings. His expectations had been dashed, and as a result, his mood had fallen to an all-time low.

Nina also stood, arrogantly raising her head. “Mark my words, Old man Wa Ge Lei: this is only the beginning.”

Wa Ge Lei merely growled in response. With the match having finished, the Water division teachers all rose from their seats and left. They were all too ashamed to stay after losing to the Divine Music division.

Ferguson slightly smiled. “The Water division’s magic was pretty good. It’s a pity that Rudimentary Water magic doesn’t have a whole lot of power. Dean Nina, your Divine Music division general Ye Yin Zhu is quite interesting.” There was one matter that he agreed with Wa Ge Lei on: even with the Divine Celestial Protection, it was impossible for a Red Rank mage to block Yellow Rank magic.

The news that the Divine Music Division prevailed over the Water division in their first Freshman Competition quickly spread throughout all of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. The match had reached a quick conclusion, amazing everyone who heard. Numerous matters pertaining to the Divine Music division were already being discussed throughout the entire institution, which caused the creation of many rumors. Ye Yin Zhu and the four beautiful ladies had become the targets of such discussions. In these discussions, the topic that was talked about the most was Ye Yin Zhu’s final moment where he released elemental magic to shield Hai Yang.

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t know that others were talking about him, however. When the match ended, the first thing he did was leave training field six and bolt away in one direction. This was because he had heard a voice right before the match ended— one that he was extremely excited to hear.

Yellow rays of light streaked through the road, leaving behind only a faint shadow. A few nearby mages who saw this couldn’t help but think that it was a senior student of the warrior district running from the mage district.

To reach his destination as fast as possible, Ye Yin Zhu didn’t even conceal his usage of Bamboo Dou Qi. After all, the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was extremely large. Even while traveling at max speed with the assistance of Bamboo Dou Qi, it still took him ten minutes to leave the institution.

Emerging from the institution, Ye Yin Zhu headed north for five kilometers before finally stopping in front of a forest. He had a hard time hiding his

excitement after arriving. Overwhelmed with emotion, he shouted out loudly, “Zi, where are you? I’m here.”

Yes, right before the match concluded, Zi’s voice had clearly resounded in his ears. He spoke only one short sentence, “I’m five kilometers north of the institution, in a nearby forest.”

As far as Ye Yin Zhu was concerned, although he had settled down in the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, it was not his home. He and Zi had been companions for ten years. Apart from his closest relatives, Zi was unconditionally the person he trusted most.

Slowly, a tall and burly figure emerged from the forest. His hair was somewhat messy, and his bright star-like violet eyes appeared to be somewhat tired. Though he looked tired, the strength in his face hadn’t waned. Looking at Yin Zhu, his apathetic eyes became slightly gentle. This change in his expression only appeared when he and Yin Zhu were together.

“Yin Zhu.” The deep voice full of magnetism made Ye Yin Zhu feel intense happiness.

“Zi——.” Yin Zhu yelled with excitement. Like an arrow, his body flickered with an intense yellow light and shot towards Zi in the blink of an eye. Like a nail being set into place, this combination of action and inaction, in spite of everything, didn’t feel even slightly unexpected.

Chapter 10 – The First Match of the Freshman Competition (IV)

Zi smiled and said, “I came here as promised. I just saw your match on stage, and it seems like you have assimilated into the life here.”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded his head and asked, “Zi, are you okay? Why do you appear tired?”

Zi’s eyes flashed with a cold light. “It’s nothing. I merely had something I needed to do. In addition, this is still only the beginning.”

Yin Zhu was startled. “Zi, you still have to leave?” His voice changed a bit upon asking this question; it brimmed with unwillingness to part from Zi.

Zi expressed a trace of a rare smile. “You are a student here. I cannot always be by your side. You’ll study here and learn everything you need to adapt to the mainland well. I have asked around, and the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts is also known as the Milan Imperial Institution which possesses the highest reputation on this mainland. Perhaps your zither magic cannot be studied here, but your social experience will increase exponentially. Furthermore, you are unlikely to encounter any danger here.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes flashed with a determined light, and he immediately stretched out his right hand with lightning-speed to grab Zi’s left arm. “Zi, if you leave, I’m following you. My two grandfathers allowed me to explore the mainland to learn through experience, and you are also here to similarly learn through experience. I don’t want to part from you again.” Although his hand only had four fingers, it was as strong as steel. Zi was somewhat amazed at Yin Zhu’s unexpected great strength.

Zi patted Yin Zhu’s shoulder. “I also don’t want to part from you again. The two of us, however, are not enough to accomplish everything we need to do on the mainland. It will be advantageous for you to stay here. Thus, I now have a compromise, but I don’t know if you will like it.”

“What compromise?” Ye Yin Zhu curiously asked.

Zi explained, “This method can allow me to not be at your side, and still allow

us to see each other at any time.”

Yin Zhu stared at him blankly, and puzzledly inquired, “Can there be such a method?”

Zi nodded, his eyes exuding a steady radiance. “I can do it today if you grant me approval. Don’t ask me why. When your strength is enough, I will explain everything to you. This method is called the Equal Life Contract.”

“Equal Life Contract? What’s that?”

Zi elaborated, “On the mainland mages can summon magical beasts to protect them, and warriors can also possess them as mounts. It’s just that they cannot summon them as easy as mages can, that’s all. When a mage summons their magical beast, however, the mage can only summon a ranked magical beast of equal rank to theirs. In addition, a mage can only sign with one magical beast contract throughout their lifetime. As a result, Rudimentary mages are unlikely to sign a contract with a magical beast. All of them will wait until their magical strength has improved before seeking out a magical beast best suited to be their lifelong partner. This is the so-called Master-Slave Contract. The reason why mages can’t summon magical beasts a rank higher is quite simple. It is because the summoning uses up a mage’s spiritual power, and if they skip a rank, it will hugely impact the mage. Only those with specialized training on the Summon division’s Summoning Technique are exceptions to this. Consequently, as you are a Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts student, you can possess a growth-type magical beast. This is why I spoke of the Equal Life Contract, breaking the Master-Slave Contract standard. Equally, you only have one chance to complete this contract in your entire life. This contract’s incantation is something only I know. Once completed, it cannot be changed. In simple terms, if you and I agree to this kind of contract, we will become contracted partners. Hereafter, no matter where we are, we will be spiritually linked. You can call me to your side, and I can do the same. This way, no matter how far we are apart, we can see each other. Each time, the summon only lasts for half an hour, and it consumes very little of the caller’s spiritual power.”

Ye Yin Zhu was pleasantly surprised and said, “Human beings can only agree to and sign this contract with magical beasts? There is such a magical contract? Fantastic, let’s begin now.”

Just as Zi was about to say something, his complexion suddenly changed. His glacial gaze looked to the side of the forest.

“Wait a moment.” A figure flickering with yellow radiance had, in the blink of an eye, arrived in front of the two of them. Even Yin Zhu couldn’t clearly see this figure’s appearance because of their extremely quick speed. He did not necessarily need to rely on his eyes to discern who it was, however, as the familiar smell was enough for him to come to a conclusion.

“Father!” Yin Zhu excitedly shouted. That was right, the figure that suddenly appeared was Ye Yin Zhu’s father, Ye Zhong.

Ye Zhong wore a gray warrior uniform. Despite already approaching the age of 40, he didn’t appear to be much bigger than Yin Zhu, only more mature. A long, jade green sword rested on his back, and he looked at Ye Yin Zhu with a gaze full of affection.

Zi looked at Ye Zhong, and Ye Zhong’s gaze also shifted to him. Their two gazes collided in the air. Ye Yin Zhu seemingly saw a spark ignite mid-air. Sixteen years, and Ye Yin Zhu had grown up. Ye Zhong’s Bamboo Dou Qi also finally cultivated to the Yellow Bamboo Sixth Rank. This was equivalent to the Rainbow Ranking System’s Advanced Level Cyan Rank Sky Warrior, which was only one level away from War Master.

“No wonder I sensed someone following us ever since we left Desolate Jade Sea. As it turns out, it’s you.” Zi said lowly.

Ye Zhong faintly smiled. “I only have one son. Regardless of whether it is his mother, two grandfathers, or I, none of us are completely at ease to allow him to explore the mainland alone. Thus I have been secretly protecting him. Now that he has arrived at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, I can consider this mission to be complete.”

“What? Father, you have been following me?” Ye Yin Zhu stared at Ye Zhong, shocked. “Does that mean you know where the person who stole my ring is?”

Ye Zhong didn’t speak. Zi’s complexion changed greatly as his gaze fell upon Yin Zhu’s four-fingered left hand to discover that the space ring had been replaced with another. “Yin Zhu, you lost your space ring? That means your zithers...”

Yin Zhu bitterly laughed, “And the introduction letter and my money – they’re all lost.”

“What?” Zi roared. Suddenly, his breath and body released their energy. Although there was no dou qi radiance, Ye Zhong was still overwhelmed with shock as he looked speechlessly at the ground beneath Zi which appeared to have cracked. Zi’s wrath even made Ye Zhong feel some pressure. His two fists clenched tighter, causing his knuckles and bones to make pipasounds. “Let me know who it is, and I’ll crush every bone in his body.”

Chapter 11 – Equal Life Contract (I)

Ye Zhong gazed deeply at his son and sternly said, “You lost your stuff, so you need to depend on your own power to retrieve it. I can only tell you that the person who stole your ring is also in Milan. Son, you need to remember: if you want to become strong, you must learn to observe and perceive everything in your surroundings.”

“He’s also in Milan?” Yin Zhu stared at his dad. Deciding to think about this later, he resolved, “Dad, I’ll rely on my own power to retrieve my ring.”

Ye Zhong said to Zi, “Zi, I want to say a few words to Yin Zhu. Alone.”

Zi didn’t pay attention to Ye Zhong. He merely looked at Yin Zhu with a reluctance to part even for a moment before he turned around and walked into the forest.

“Yin Zhu. I have seen everything you have encountered on this journey. Whether it is you killing those mages in Luna City or losing the ring your Grandfather Qin gave you, I have not stepped in. Do you know why?”

Ye Yin Zhu, somewhat at a loss, shook his head.

Ye Zhong spoke heavily, “Because I want you to be able to grow from your experiences and not from under my protection. Maybe I could have helped you when you lost your space ring, but what happens if next time I am not by your side? You’re 16 years old this year; according to the conventions of the mainland, you’re already an adult. From now on you must learn to be strong and to face every challenge. Therefore, I haven’t interfered this whole time. Perhaps you have not followed your Grandfather Qin’s entire plan, but I think this is a good thing. You’re walking down your own path. You have to keep in mind what your two grandfathers have taught you.”

When his dad looked at him with such severity, Ye Yin Zhu unexpectedly discovered the hesitation and indecisiveness he felt after leaving Desolate Jade Sea disappear. These two feelings stopped festering within his heart.

“Father, I will.”

Changing from dad to father, there was only a small difference, but Ye Zhong distinctly felt that his son had truly grown up.

“Yin Zhu, I don’t object to you killing. Still, I must tell you that you don’t necessarily have to kill your enemies. Some criminals aren’t deadly, and other methods could be used to deal with them. At the same time, murder also has a heavy cost. Although you didn’t bear the price when you killed the people in the Arcadian Magic Guild last time, the entire Arcadian Magic Guild, and even the whole kingdom, did. Fortunately, we wish to see situations like this. Although Zi doesn’t have any malicious intentions towards you, in some ways he is prejudiced. He is not always right; you must also use your own judgement. That time when you were apart, I followed him. Later, because I was worried you would be dead or your zither would have an accident, I nearly returned to your side. Zi possesses a very mysterious background. He and the beastmen of the Northern Wasteland have some kind of special relationship.”

Listening to his father, Yin Zhu couldn’t help but wrinkle his brow. He resolved, “Father, Zi absolutely won’t harm me. We’re brothers. Also, what price did Arcadia bear in my place?”

Ye Zong slightly smiled and said, “You do not need to know about the Arcadia matter; your two grandfathers have handled it. I’m merely reminding you that it’s not for you to make such judgements. I have also just heard the proposal Zi raised. Although I don’t know what the true connotations of the Equal Life Contract are, I am certain that once the two of you complete the contract, it is impossible for you to possess a magical beast. This contract is singular. As a mage, your magical beast is extremely important. Your Grandfather Qin cultivated zither magic in his adolescence, causing his strength to be too weak. He signed a contract with a Rudimentary magical beast and was unable to possess a stronger magical beast afterward.”

“Grandfather Qin has a magical beast? Why didn’t I know?”

Ye Zhong sighed and said, “In order to protect your Grandfather Qin, his magical beast fought and died early on. In order to remember it, and also because of the former contract’s influence, your Grandfather Qin has not

possessed another magical beast since. How you deal with your relationship with Zi, you'll decide on your own. I need to leave. I left Desolate Jade Sea in order to escort you to Milan, but I also must go to the Ascoli Kingdom to do something. You need to stay in the institution; you don't have to return home once the term ends. We'll contact you. When you mature, our Bamboo Sect and Zither Sect should be somewhat active."

Ye Zhong embraced his son once he finished speaking. Not allowing Ye Yin Zhu to say anything, his body soared up. Bounding like a shooting star, Ye Zhong disappeared from sight.

"Strong, I must be strong." Resisting the feeling of loss upon his father's departure, Yin Zhu's clear eyes held something else within them. From his previous problems, Ye Zhong had given him extremely important lessons. Ye Yin Zhu had already gradually separated himself from Desolate Jade Sea where except for his cultivation, he did not have to be in charge of his life. He realized now, however, that he could only rely on himself.

Looking at the tall figure that had returned to his side, Ye Yin Zhu faintly smiled, nodded, and said, "Let's start."

Zi stared blankly. "Start? Start what?"

Yin Zhu exclaimed, "The Equal Life Contract of course!"

Deeply examining Yin Zhu's handsome face, Zi said with a low voice, "You have decided? I thought when you and your father talked, he told you the disadvantages of the contract and how it influences your future. I want you to think clearly and not regret this afterward."

"There is nothing to consider. I have already thought this quite thoroughly. In fact, right after my father and I finished discussing how a completed contract's influence will prevent me from summoning a magical beast, I merely asked myself a question. I asked myself, 'Would I rather have a strong magical beast or always have you by my side? Which was more important?' I don't need to explain my answer." Ye Yin Zhu, from beginning to end, rejected the magical beast summon because he didn't want to refuse the Equal Life Contract. His thinking was very simple as he grasped the most important point during his reflection. Signing the contract not only restricted him, it also restricted Zi. Zi

wasn't worried, so why should he be worried? Why was it necessary to have a magical beast to become strong? His father firmly said it himself: 'To become strong, you can only rely on yourself.'

Zi observed the warm smile on Yin Zhu's face and his bright eyes suddenly exuded heartfelt emotions. "Good brother. I will never forget your trust in me."

"We are brothers." Ye Yin Zhu simply repeated those three words. Yes! Since they were brothers, was there any need to say anything more?

The Zither Emperor and Violet Emperor looked at each other. From this moment on, throughout their entire lives, the brotherly feelings between these two had never changed, instead becoming more resolute with the passing of time.

"Zi, begin." Yin Zhu looked at the very excited Zi, his mood equally eager. If they complete this contract, he could see Zi at any time even if he was in the institution.

"Okay, repeat after me." Zi never liked hesitating. "Within the eternal permanence of the galaxy, let the sun and moon be witness. I, Zi."

"Within the eternal permanence of the galaxy, let the sun and moon be witness. I, Ye Yin Zhu."

Zi bit down hard on his right forefinger, breaking the skin. His blood was actually a light violet, which was extremely strange.

Ye Yin Zhu copied his movements. The two men touched their bleeding fingers together in the air. Suddenly, the scarlet and light violet colored blood blended together in an instant. An intense magical wave exploded out in a flash, it was like a storm had engulfed the two men's bodies and carried them away. In mid air, a faint river of stars emitted rays of light which descended from the heavens, isolating the two from everything around them.

Chapter 11 – Equal Life Contract (II)

In the blink of an eye, Ye Yin Zhu felt as though his spiritual power had seemingly arrived in another world, the surroundings from before completely disappearing. He could feel only the presence of a dignified air. Without a doubt, this was the moon and star’s ancient power.

The surroundings were very bright, the sun, the moon, and the stars naturally emanating their radiance. Ye Yin Zhu, however, could only stare ahead at Zi.

“Start! Gate of the Contract! Release thy honorable glory and bless me, create an everlasting seal for this contract. The Earth has its limits. The ocean has an edge. The north wind wanders through a labyrinth. The signal fire ignites in a holy circle. Forever listen to this cherished desire. By means of each other’s blood, I, Zi, wish from now on to begin my life together with Ye Yin Zhu, sharing my life with him and helping each other – never changing.”

Zi’s eyes ignited, emitting two rays of light that penetrated deeply into Ye Yin Zhu’s heart. Yin Zhu clearly felt something like this before had happened to his mind, but Zi this time was even more profoundly engraved into his soul and memory. Imperceptibly, Zi’s body seemed to become incomparably gigantic, but at this moment, he also seemed blurred.

“Start! Gate of the Contract! Release thy honorable glory and bless me, create an everlasting seal for this contract. The Earth has its limits. The ocean has an edge. The north wind wanders through a labyrinth. The signal fire ignites in a holy circle. Forever listen to this cherished desire. By means of each other’s blood, I, Ye Yin Zhu, wish from now on to begin my life together with Zi, sharing my life with him and helping each other – never changing.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s body soared high into a milky white radiance, soft white lights mixing together with a violet light that brimmed with aggressiveness. The two lights intertwined and rose. The dignified air disappeared from sight. Regardless of whether it was Ye Yin Zhu or Zi, at this very moment they both clearly sensed each other, everything becoming very transparent. Ye Yin Zhu finally looked at

Zi's whole, but this whole was exceptionally vague. He could sense within Zi's heart a former inexhaustible sadness and near insane wrath, all of the emotions profoundly branded deep into his heart.

A gigantic violet and white dichromatic light finally finished condensing into a magic Six-Point Star which appeared above their heads. Their bodies imperceptibly stuck together, slowly rotating as their spiritual power blended. Even the drawn blood subtly began to change. Ye Yin Zhu clearly sensed his body filling with a boundless power while Zi sensed his mind becoming increasingly clearer.

Actually, even Zi didn't know that the Equal Life Contract was the highest level of contract. If agreed to and signed, not only could both parties summon each other, the split second the contract was completed, both of their abilities, when devoted to the other during selfless situations, complemented one another. Ye Yin Zhu received life energy and increased physical strength as a benefit. Zi received increased spiritual power and increased insightful thoughts. This didn't just affect their own abilities, it layered over and improved them. Zi's spiritual power improvement was not prominent, but Ye Yin Zhu's Bamboo Dou Qi had a substantial physical strength increase. It quietly broke through to the Yellow Bamboo Second Rank at last, which was the Intermediate Level Green Rank according to the Rainbow Ranking System.



Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts

As Ferguson was the institution's president, he lived alone in the center of the residential district within a tower-like house, having the optimal and most beautiful surroundings of the entire institution. Although this tower was far from being comparable to the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda, it still properly represented his status within the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.

Now, Ferguson sat in a lounge on his balcony, basking in the warm sunshine. He leisurely looked to the side at his old friend's enchanted personal letter.

"Yi, what is this power? So strange." Ferguson originally languid gaze suddenly sharpened. He turned over, rose, and looked toward the north. The faint white-violet streams of air in the sky circulated, lasting for no less than half a minute

before gradually fading away.

Sensing the distant dou qi, Ferguson thought to himself, 'Extremely powerful elemental wave that's apparently not from an attack or defense. Could it be that a powerful magical beast was being born? No, wrong. That dou qi was very gentle and didn't resemble a magical beast. It resembled a summoning or contract elemental wave. Looking at where that radiance was produced, it is clearly five kilometers away. I could sense the elemental dou qi from this distance, what kind of contract or summon is this?'

In fact, not much in Milan could interest Ferguson. Today the Divine Music division's reliance on the Divine Celestial Protection, using Red Rank strength, to block a Yellow Rank Cry of the Water Dragon made him slightly interested. And now this white-violet elemental wave brought him greater temptation.

"Come out, my old friend Ke Sa." Above his right hand a large, violet stream of air effortlessly formed a violet magic Six-Point Star in the air. Then, a low growl full of pressure sounded out, and a large figure appeared from within the Six-Pointed Star.

That large figure was a huge Red Dragon. Red Dragon was a dragon race with only one member. Among the dragon races, however, the Red Dragon race was not the strongest. Nevertheless, it was still a genuine dragon, not a tamed dragon. A fully matured Red Dragon could reach rank 8, but there were some Red Dragons that even approached rank 9 in strength. Rank 8 Red Dragon's fire magic combined with their melee ability made it impossible for an ordinary human with Violet Rank strength to handle.

Ferguson summoned this Red Dragon called Ke Sa which exceeded 20 meters in height, clearly indicating that it was a fully mature Red Dragon. This Rank 8's powerful pressure made some small animals within the forest surrounding the tower faint.

As he flapped wings that could create hurricanes, Ke Sa lifted up his relatively small front claw to scratch his head and lay down with a bleary look. "Old friend, why did you summon me?" Being a beast that surpassed a rank 7 sentient magical beast, he had no issues with talking even though he wasn't a rank 9 magical beast that could transform into a completely human form.

Ferguson smiled and said, “Ke Sa, I apologize for bothering your sleep. I just discovered, however, a bizarre elemental wave and want you to take a look. You also know that I am a Spiritual mage and cannot use flying magic.”

Ke Sa turned over and rolled his eyes, helpless in front of the tower. He turned around to show his own dragon bottom to Ferguson. “Climb on. In any case, I’ll give you the ride of your life.”

Ferguson mischievously laughed hehe with an ‘I have you now’ expression as he swayed and climbed onto Ke Sa’s back. He climbed up all the way to sit at the neck, not worrying about how he might fall off. With Ke Sa’s strength and build, even jumping off of him was a complicated matter.

Huge wings flapped, and in a burst of wind, the Red Dragon Ke Sa’s huge body soared high into the air, a scorching stream of dou qi trailing behind him as he headed in the direction Ferguson pointed to.

A huge dragon flying swiftly upwards above the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was not a novel affair, so only a few new students felt curious about this.

Traveling almost five kilometers on the dragon took just a dozen or so breaths of time. Recognizing the elemental wave’s origin, Ferguson made Ke Sa descend.

After landing on the ground, Ke Sa’s body trembled violently as a tremendous dragon power was suddenly released. A light blue blaze revolved around its huge body. The nearby forest roasted beneath it, the trees and plants yellowing and withering away.

“Ke Sa, how are you?” Ferguson sensed his partner’s uneasiness.

The sleepiness in Ke Sa’s eyes had been obliterated completely. The dragon’s eyes emitted sharp rays of light in all directions as it looked around. “This smells like a growth-type magical beast. Moreover, it’s a scent that’s makes me feel disgusted.”

Chapter 11 – Equal Life Contract (III)

“Oh?” Ferguson was immediately intrigued and asked, “Can you determine what this magical beast is?”

Red Dragon Ke Sa shook its immense head. “No, I’m still not sure. I can only sense that this is a growth-type magical beast scent placing me under tremendous pressure. This is the first time I have actually come across this scent, so I am unable to determine which magical beast it belongs to. In addition, this human scent beside it ought to be the person who summoned the magical beast here.”

Dragons had a smelling ability a hundred times more potent than the human race, so Ferguson didn’t doubt his partner one bit. He couldn’t help but sink into meditation at this moment. Considering it was a growth-type magical beast, it meant it had not yet reached rank 9, but that also meant Ke Sa should not be able to sense such tremendous pressure. If a rank 9 magical beast really appeared here, it would certainly be strange. Making Ke Sa feel disgust, however, at least proved that this magical beast was by no means a dragon.

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t know that the Equal Life Contract he just completed with Zi had already aroused President Ferguson’s attention. Currently, he and Zi were on the road, walking back to the institution together.

“Yin Zhu, I need to leave. If in the future you run into anything troublesome that you cannot resolve, summon me at once.” Zi embraced Yin Zhu’s side, the chill in his eyes completely gone as he resembled an elder brother concerned about his gentle younger brother.

“Zi, if you have any trouble, you must also summon me. I said I would protect you.” Ye Yin Zhu slightly laughed. This was the first time he wasn’t worried about Zi no longer being by his side. If either of them desired, he could have the other come to him at any time.

After the contract was completed, Yin Zhu’s and Zi’s minds had a one-of-a-kind indescribable spiritual connection. The other’s aura made both of them feel

more comfortable. Thanks to the spiritual connection, they could even feel the other's mood.

"Zi, I'm hesitant." Yin Zhu admitted.

"What are you hesitant about?"

"Today, the Freshman Competition has begun. We defeated the Water division in our first match, but Grandmother Nina told me that the Water division is the weakest of the nine magic divisions. The opponents from the other divisions are all very powerful. I don't know if I should use my sound blade infused musical composition against them. Grandfather Qin told me that if the sound blade sees an enemy, they will die. Father, however, just told me not to kill anyone. It's only a competition so naturally it'll be sinful to kill them."

Zi understood the doubts in Yin Zhu's heart, so he tranquilly smiled and said, "This is something only you can decide. I can only say that although your Grandfather Qin is afraid about your capabilities being revealed and has some misgivings, if you want to become strong then it isn't necessary to conceal your strength. If you temper your strength with real combat experience without using your full strength, it's not beneficial. Concealing your strength is not the best way; the goal is to allow yourself to become even stronger."

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, "I have also thought about this. More importantly, apart from me, the Divine Music division members are all girls. I don't want them to receive harm in the next match, but I also don't want them to help me ward off our opponent's attacks next time. I am a man. I should be standing in the front."

"Yin Zhu, you have matured very quickly. I can feel relieved when I leave like this. You must remember, we can only successfully summon the other if he is not in a battle situation. In other words, if you want to summon me to your side, you must make sure I am not fighting. Otherwise the summon won't succeed and vice versa. Only the party in a battle can summon the party not in a battle." Zi once more patted Yin Zhu's shoulder, turned around, and left. Ye Yin Zhu discovered that unconsciously, he had already returned to the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts entrance.

Strolling into the institution, he didn't worry as he slowly headed in the

direction of the mixed district. He had an excellent memory, so despite only living in the institution for several days he had already memorized in his heart the path he frequently used to reach the mixed district.

Breathing in the institution's fresh air as he passed the north district, he soon arrived at the mixed district. At this moment, a party of people stopped Yin Zhu.

Although there were seven of them with varying heights, the weapons on their bodies indicated they were not a part of the north district's magic divisions.

"Stop. You are Ye Yin Zhu, right?" The seven people lined up in a row and blocked Ye Yin Zhu.

"I am. Is something the matter?" Yin Zhu wrinkled his brow, his intuition telling him that these people did not have good intentions.

"Is something the matter, of course something is the matter. Boy, today you made us lose a lot of money. Originally we intended to make some pocket money, but we didn't expect that this blade of grass among ten thousand flowers would ruin it all. Tell me, what should we do?" The leader was a tall youth that almost looked like Fei Si Qie La. He appeared to be approximately 20 years old with a tiger face. On his back were two huge battle-axes.

Ye Yin Zhu asked, somewhat at a loss, "I made you lose money?"

"Of course. Are you saying that I, Jia Nei Di, am lying? Today your Divine Music division defeated the Water division. We bet that the Water division would win, so the outcome lost us our life savings. During the Freshman Competition, some senior students secretly opened a gambling joint. Today the Divine Music division and the Water division match was the focus of the Freshman Competition. It was only natural that at the gambling joint, the betting was not on who would win because no one thought highly of the Divine Music division. The betting was on whether or not the Divine Music division could last against the Water division for half an hour. The outcome clearly made the overwhelming majority lose. This Jia Nei Di and the other six people all live in the mixed district as work-study students. Of course we don't have any money and didn't believe we would lose so much while gambling. We're so angry it's unbearable, but we won't dare make things difficult for the beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division. Still, who will stop us from going after Ye Yin Zhu, who also lives in the

mixed district? We intend to take our revenge.”

“This is your problem, and it does not concern me. What do you think?” Ye Yin Zhu wasn’t fond of bullies. He provoked Jia Nei Di’s party of seven, while in his heart he thought it through and decided to listen to his dad’s words and not kill them.

“What do we think? We don’t want to think of anything. As long as you compensate us for our losses. It’s not much, altogether it’s 40 gold coins. Give us the money and we’ll leave. If not, today we’ll make you suffer physical pain.” Jia Nei Di was not that much shorter than Zi, and his large palm-leaf hands were clasped together, knuckles cracking. Pipa. With his tiger-like outward appearance, he really did appear to be a tiger man. It was a pity, he picked on the wrong target today.

“I don’t have any money, but I would never give it to you anyway. I heard that if you agree to bet then you must accept your losses in gambling. Could it be that you didn’t understand?” A faint cold light graced Yin Zhu’s face as his Bamboo Dou Qi circulated within his body. Because of his contract with Zi, he received an explosive strength within his body that wanted to surge out. Confronting these opponents, he didn’t bother to prepare to use his hard earned Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither.

At this moment, a bizarre scene arose. Just as Jia Nei Di was about to attack, he suddenly stiffened and stood motionless. His eyes brimmed with a frightened light. A seven inch long dagger had unknowingly been pressed to his throat. The dagger was black, not reflecting light at all. The breath of the forest made his skin tremble and shiver, even shuddering. The cold murderous spirit stimulated his throat; he seemed to feel the hot blood within his body on the verge of squirting out.

“Yes, that’s it. Don’t move. I cannot guarantee my hand will remain steady,” A gentle voice echoed from behind Jia Nei Di. Jia Nei Di’s six companions were overwhelmed with horror as they watched on. They didn’t know when the petite figure had appeared behind Jia Nei Di. Now, his hand was pressing down on Jia Nei Di’s thick shoulders to prop up his own body while his other hand was holding a black dagger. Although his face expressed a faint smile, his eyes brimmed with a deadly light.

Chapter 11 – Equal Life Contract (IV)

“Who are you?” Jia Nei Di frightfully shouted, clearly sensing that the person behind him could desire his life at any time.

“This is the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. I am like you, I am also a student here. You want to bully my roommate, you ought to first ask me if I agree or disagree.” This petite student was not a stranger; it was Ye Yin Zhu’s roommate Sura.

Cold sweat dripped down Jia Nei Di’s forehead. He had already guessed that the person behind him was of the Assassin division. Over in the warrior district, regardless of how strong the warriors were, they didn’t want to face a member of the Assassin division. Assassins were everywhere, and which of them wanted to be the focus of a killer? Jia Nei Di had always been confident of his own strength, but Sura’s sudden touch from behind his body, without him even slightly anticipating it, made it clear he couldn’t handle an assassin. Even if they were inside the institution, it was unlikely someone would suspect an assassin’s hostility. An assassin’s first lesson when facing the enemy was that regardless of location, they might be required to kill the potential threat in the cradle. Thus word circulated throughout Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts: Provoke a teacher, but don’t provoke a student of the Assassin division.

“This, this big brother, I know it’s wrong. I didn’t know Ye Yin Zhu is your roommate. Let me go, and we’ll immediately go our own ways.” Jia Nei Di’s voice trembled because the black dagger appeared to rub against his neck.

“Next time I see you, I will not speak again.” Sura’s gentle voice suddenly became dark. What does not speaking represent to an assassin? It meant elimination.

The black blade quietly disappeared like magic, and Jia Nei Di and his six companions watched attentively as Sura’s body faintly flashed before unexpectedly disappearing from sight. Stealth was a concealment skill only advanced assassins could grasp.

Deep fear clutched at these seven's hearts. Jia Nei Di glanced at Ye Yin Zhu and didn't dare make a verbal spectacle. He led his companions away with their tails between their legs.

Ye Yin Zhu's gaze moved towards the left of his body where a petite body noiselessly came into view beside him. It was Sura.

"Sura, thank you." Yin Zhu humbly smiled.

Sura looked at Ye Yin Zhu with some amazement because the moment before he appeared, he could clearly sense intangible spiritual waves latching onto his body.

"Even if I didn't make a move, I'm convinced you could have settled it. Scaring them is better, however. That Jia Nei Di is a well-known Heavy Sword division second-year. His martial arts are pretty good. Next time, I reckon they won't dare to seek you out to trouble you." Sura laughed happily. Now, regardless of his deadly eyes or his cold murderous, forest green gaze, they had already disappeared from view.

Sura's performance just now made Ye Yin Zhu feel something completely new. He now knew that his roommate was actually strong.

"Congratulations, Yin Zhu."

"Congratulations? Oh, you're talking about our match with the Water division today?"

Sura gave him a thumbs-up and said, "I really didn't expect the Divine Music division to also have a fortune-changing day. Come on, let's go back to our dormitory. What do you want to eat this evening? I'll make you something."

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, "You are a really good housekeeper. Those four gold coins are really worth it. Not only tidying up the rooms, but also cooking the food. You're even a bodyguard, free of charge."

Sura mischievously laughed and replied, "If you believe it's cheap, give me a raise. I won't refuse." While speaking, he rubbed his right thumb over his forefinger and middle finger, seemingly in some wretched gesture. Now he was incapable of being mentioned on equal terms with that callous assassin just a moment ago.

The small dormitory had already become Sura and Ye Yin Zhu's home. A large luxurious villa was not necessarily comfortable to live in. Even though the dormitory was small, it was clean and tidy. Every day when Ye Yin Zhu returned here, it would give him a warm feeling. Since he arrived at Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, the teacher who had given him the deepest impression was naturally Nina, and the student who had given him the deepest impression was not the Divine Music division's Hai Yang or the other beautiful ladies, it was his roommate Sura instead.

Sura was extremely competent. He always kept the dormitory neat and tidy. It was even difficult for Ye Yin Zhu to see when he tidies up; it was also very difficult to find even a speck of dust in the dormitory. Today he gained knowledge of Sura's strength as an assassin and couldn't refrain from being amazed. Apparently, each person had their own secrets, and Sura's secret was especially grand.

Perhaps the attacking Jia Nei Di didn't even know what rank Sura's strength was, but Ye Yin Zhu understood it very thoroughly. An assassin would not easily release their dou qi and thus didn't allow their opponent to clearly feel their strength. This was the assassin's first priority. Ye Yin Zhu's spiritual power, however, was significantly stronger than his peers. Once Sura let go of Jia Nei Di and concealed his figure, he could clearly sense Sura's body emit a dou qi aura not much different from his own. This indicated that Sura had at least Primary Level Green Rank dou qi. Among their peers, this was highly difficult to imagine. One must know, even Ye Yin Zhu took ten years of bitter cultivation and absolute focus in order to raise his dou qi to this level! Even without asking around, Yin Zhu could guess that Sura was unconditionally the Assassin division's strongest new student.

"Eat, what do you think?" Returning to normal, Sura's happy face was carefree and without worries. Fishing his purse from his chest, he calculated the food expenses.

Their two lunches for the past two days consisted of one meat dish and one vegetable dish, plus four steamed buns and even a small pot of vegetable soup.

"Wow! Sura, what day is it for this to be so delicious?" Yin Zhu exclaimed, astonished.

Sura smiled and answered, “Didn’t your Divine Music division win today? Consider this your celebration. Every month we have to eat some meat to keep our bodies healthy for a long time. In the afternoon you have another match, so eat quickly. My afternoon is free, so I’ll come with you to the playing field once we finish eating to cheer you on.”

“Thank you, Sura.” Ye Yin Zhu suddenly felt his throat clog up with something.

Sura lowered his head, his eyes flashing with a peculiar light. He opened his mouth to say, “You’re welcome. If you really want to thank me, just keep it up. If you can get a ranking and some award money, then we may live better.”

“I will.” For his own honor, and also for Sura, Ye Yin Zhu for the first time had a definite goal: the Freshman Competition championship finals.

Wolfing down his food and finishing his lunch, Sura accompanied Ye Yin Zhu to return to the Divine Music division. Now, the Divine Music division’s beautiful ladies were all there. Perhaps because of their victory over the Water division this morning, the Divine Music division was filled with a jubilant mood.

“Yin Zhu, you came. Where did you go once the match ended?” Xue Ling’s sharp eyes spotted Yin Zhu as he neared the classroom.

Yin Zhu remembered that Xue Ling had suddenly kissed him earlier in the excitement and couldn’t help feeling somewhat embarrassed when he looked at her. With his handsome face red, he replied, “Xue Ling, I just returned home to eat. Oh, I should introduce you. This is my roommate, Sura of the Assassin division.”

Sura and Fei Si Qie La were two extremely different types of people. Fei Si Qie La’s eyes would pop out of their sockets upon seeing a beautiful woman. Sura’s reaction was very dull, the smile on his face even lessened slightly as he merely nodded his head and said hello to Xue Ling.

Chapter 12 – Netherworld Snow Spirit (I)

The Divine Music division’s first-year students were all inside the classroom. This included Hai Yang. Hai Yang currently sat in the corner, tuning her guzheng.

Xue Ling faced Ye Yin Zhu and said, “Everyone is discussing the afternoon match.”

Ye Yin Zhu puzzledly asked, “Discussing? Didn’t Grandmother Nina already explain the plan this morning?”

Xue Ling happily smiled and said, “We’re talking about having a cheering squad. The seniors said that if we can win this match, for tomorrow’s match they’ll collectively go out and cheer us on. When that moment comes, it will absolutely shock the entire institution. Yin Zhu, how could you call Dean Nina grandmother; you’re not afraid of death, but we are afraid of being hurt.”

Yin Zhu humbly smiled but didn’t reply. Just at this moment, the classroom door opened and Nina came in from the outside. Although her complexion still appeared as arrogant and icy as before, everyone could feel that today, Nina’s mood wasn’t bad from her smiling eyes.

Clapping her hands, Nina became the center of everyone’s attention. “Alright. Everyone, listen to what I have to say. I’ve just returned from the lottery. Our afternoon opponent is the Dark Magic division. Same tactics as this morning, only you must be more careful. Once you can no longer continuously defend against the other side’s attacks, immediately concede. Ye Yin Zhu, this is for you to decide.”

To be fair, the Freshman Competition had round-robin tournament where each stage was redetermined as lots were drawn with the exception of previous opponents.

Hearing that their next opponent was the Dark Magic division, Xue Ling and Lan Xi cried out in alarm simultaneously. Kong Que’s complexion changed despite not saying a word. Her haughty face, however, was somewhat gloomy. Seated in the corner, only Hai Yang had no reaction, still appearing ice-cold and tranquil.

The Magic Department's nine great division specializations were the Water division, Fire division, Wind division, Earth division, Light division, Dark Magic division, Summon division, Spirit division, and the Spatial Domain division. Among these, six of the before-mentioned were classified as elemental magic while the other three were classified as special magic. The most mysterious of them was naturally the Spatial Domain division while the strongest were the Spirit division and the Summon division. The one division people didn't wish to confront the most, however, was actually the Dark Magic division.

Qin Shang once explained in detail to Yin Zhu the marvels of each type of magic. Water magic was relatively weak in the beginning. Dark Magic in simple terms was the exact opposite; it had the most powerful magic in the beginning. These were Green Rank and below Dark Magic. Dark Magic for the most part used sacrificial offerings to summon the darkness element for one's own use. This power was extremely strong. Included among those was corrosion magic, which easily makes anyone unwilling to face them. When corrosion magic struck a target, the injury couldn't be healed. This was also the reason why the beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division were frightened.

"Grandmother Nina, am I allowed to arrange the tactics for the afternoon match?" This was not the first time he called Nina grandmother in front of everybody, but this was absolutely the calmest Ye Yin Zhu had called her.

Nina glanced at him, but everyone was startled when she didn't flare up and instead nodded, saying, "Good. Since you are the general, you'll make the decisions. I only require you to explain important matters to me in advance, all under heavy security. I do not want any accidents to happen to you all. Don't leave any magical openings; the Dark Magic division's magical damage is very strong."

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and replied, "I understand. Senior Hai Yang, this afternoon I am requesting you to play the << A Chinese Ghost Story >> song once again."

Hai Yang stared blankly, her pale charming face displaying astonishment. "Why? << A Chinese Ghost Story >> song only expresses sorrow. The Dark Magic division's students are not as easy to handle as the Water division. If << A Chinese Ghost Story >> is successfully completed, it might not make them lose their combat ability."

Ye Yin Zhu confidently said, “I ask Senior Hai Yang to obey to my plan. Furthermore, Xue Ling, Lan Xi, Kong Que. You three ought to also be able to play this musical composition. I’m asking you to perform with the musical instruments you are experts with. Lan Xi, at that time you will be playing with me as the zither is the most difficult to make compatible with other instruments. Pay attention to my technique when the moment comes.”

Lan Xi somewhat excitedly nodded and agreed. After she had witnessed Yin Zhu’s zither art, she had already asked him to instruct her. To the side Kong Que was ignored and unhappily said, “Ye Yin Zhu, what is this idea of yours? If everyone plays << A Chinese Ghost Story >>, who would defend against the Dark Magic division’s magical attacks?”

“Me.” Ye Yin Zhu’s reply was only one word, but it was spoken with exceptional resolution.”

Kong Que somewhat disdainfully questioned, “You?”

Ye Yin Zhu had the least favorable impression of the conceited Kong Que out of the four female competitors. He indifferently said, “I can’t tell you what to do? If you think you can resist the opponent’s magical attacks, I as general will allow you to do so.”

“You...” Kong Que was indignant. “Who are you to have the impertinence to talk to me like this. Believe it or not, I...”

“Enough. The match still hasn’t begun, yet you want to fight among ourselves? Kong Que, you need to remember, this is not the Palermo Kingdom. Since I said that Ye Yin Zhu is the general, starting from today, everything concerning the competition will follow his plans.” Nina’s serene voice made Kong Que choke back her words.

That afternoon the Divine Music division’s playing field was the Dark Magic division’s training field four. This training field was different from the Water division’s standard. Although the size was more or less the same, the unexpectedly black training field was constructed with all kinds of materials. When they first arrived here, everyone clearly felt that it was somewhat sinister.

Since the creation of Training field four, it rarely bustled with noise and excitement. The number of people coming to watch the Divine Music division

and Dark Magic division's match was greater by two tenths than the number of the people who went to watch the morning Divine Music division and Water division match. Even if the Divine Music division already won one match, up until now, people still didn't think highly of them. The majority of the students all believed the reason why the Water division lost the match this morning was because the Water division freshman had been too careless, causing their attack speed to be slowed. They were correct to notice that the magic casting rate was slow, but it was not because the Water division was careless. It was instead caused by the musical composition's influence.

"Yin Zhu, you must put in the extra effort! I bet a gold coin on your Divine Music division," Sura whispered to Ye Yin Zhu as he prepared to go onto the field.

Ye Yin Zhu wrinkled his brow and said, "My grandfather told me it's not good to gamble."

Sura mischievously laughed and said, "It's a small bet to support you. It doesn't matter. Okay, you need to enter the field immediately. I'll cheer you on."

Unlike the first match, this time the Divine Music division didn't move one set of table and chair, but rather three sets. Apart from Ye Yin Zhu who carried a table and chair to the training field for himself, the other two sets for Hai Yang and Lan Xi's use were prematurely placed by the students of the other divisions.

"Divine Music division, let's go, Divine Music division, win." Sharp and clear voices shouted and attracted the attention of everyone present to a lovely sight. The Divine Music division's first-year students, excluding the four competing, had eight other girls. Now dressed in their school uniform at the training field, they cheered on the side Ye Yin Zhu was on. At this moment, the majority of the girls' gazes fell on Ye Yin Zhu's body. Although Ye Yin Zhu's temperament gave people the feeling that he was from a poor background, his appearance was extremely outstanding. If his vocation wasn't a measly Divine Music mage, the female students would have already started chasing after him. Unfortunately, this world put strength first.

The number of Dark Magic division's new students were the lowest among the Magic Department's nine great divisions and not much more than the Spirit

division's branch Divine Music division. Each year they had only 20-30 students. Now that they were gathered together, they appeared incompatible with the other divisions and their students.

Ye Yin Zhu's table and chair were placed at the very front. Behind him stood Lan Xi and Hai Yang, and standing behind them were Xue Ling and Kong Que in the very back. This was the first time Ye Yin Zhu saw their musical instruments. Xue Ling's musical instrument was a blue jade xiao while Kong Que's pipa was a cream-colored pipa which resembled sculpted ivory with its sparkling exterior. The occasionally touched strings released notes full of a metallic tone.

Chapter 12 – Netherworld Snow Spirit (II)

Both parties were already present and opposite of each other in the center of the field. Ye Yin Zhu was somewhat amazed as the Dark Magic division members completely mismatched the gender ratio of the Divine Music division. While the Divine Music division had one male and four females, the Dark Magic division had four males and one female, and what was even more amazing was that the female student was their general. From the symbol on her school uniform, she was also a first-year new student.

“Dark Magic division first-year student, general, Yue Ming. Please select the competition style.” The Dark Magic division’s female general spoke very concisely. Her dark blue hair draped over her shoulders and flowed down her back. Wearing a black magic robe, her two big eyes should appear very touching but instead released a deadly sort of dark light. Her ice-cold body apparently didn’t have a single trace of liveliness.

“Divine Music division first-year student, general, Ye Yin Zhu. Team Battle,” Ye Yin Zhu replied with equal conciseness. He was already strongly vigilant in front of this girl named Yue Ming. He thought to himself, ‘Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts really deserves being called the mainland’s best college. She’s just a first-year student and is unexpectedly such a remarkable student.’ The current Dark Magic division clearly couldn’t be compared with this morning’s Water division.

One of the Dark Magic division’s students disdainfully sneered, “The Divine Music division brought tables onto the battlefield?”

Behind Ye Yin Zhu’s back, Xue Ling sarcastically bantered, “Have you come across a Divine Music mage on the battlefield before? Win before you get so full of yourself.”

Ye Yin Zhu and Yue Ming bowed their heads to each other before both divisions’ students fell back simultaneously. The defensive shield activated on training field four. The referee then gave the order, and the match began.

In the spectator's grandstand were Nina and the Dark Magic division Dean. Different from Wa Ge Lei, the Dark Magic division Dean, despite being male, was awfully ice-cold and didn't say a word since he appeared at the start of the match. Perhaps because the Divine Music division's victory had evoked his interest. President Ferguson appeared once more in the spectator's grandstand.

"This child Yue Ming is more and more outstanding. I don't know how long the Divine Music division can persevere in today's battle." Even he was in no way optimistic about the Divine Music division. Yue Ming was his old friend's granddaughter, and he was very clear about her strength.

When the referee started the match, 10 red-colored spheres of light appeared in midair. They were brimming with death and shot towards the five members of the Divine Music division. Yellow light flickered as the Dark Magic division's five students were unexpectedly all Yellow Rank mages. They were led by Yue Ming whose body emitted a yellow elemental radiance that indicated she was an Advanced Level Yellow Rank.

In a flash the sphere darkened, and the students, who surrounded the training field to watch the battle, cried out in alarm.

"I have everything." Ye Yin Zhu calmly made this clear. The teardrop-shaped gem ring flashed with radiance on his left hand as the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance appeared above the table in front of him. Facing the pressure Yue Ming produced, Ye Yin Zhu's heart brimmed with an intense urge to fight.

Ye Yin Zhu seemed to become a different person as he sat before his zither. His graceful, steady hands pressed against the strings. At this moment, the synergy of his heart and the Moon and Tide's Clear Brilliance zither produced a wonderful resonance.

Seeing that the 10 dark spheres had appeared out of thin air, Ye Yin Zhu still hadn't activated his Divine Celestial Protection. Lightly pressing against the strings with his right hand, downcast and deeply resounding notes hummed out. Across, the five Dark Magic division students bodies shook at the same time; they had just opened their mouths to chant a magic spell and were, to their surprise, forcibly interrupted immediately.

In the spectator's grandstand, Nina abruptly stood up. Startled, she stared at

Ye Yin Zhu on the training field. Sonic boom, could it be that it was a sonic boom? Otherwise, how could the zither note that was not yet played still interrupt the other party's spell? But he wasn't strong enough to use Green Rank magic!

Not activating the Divine Celestial Protection, within that low humming, a distant, deeply resounding zither note had already been played. A blended yellow-red radiance revolved beneath Ye Yin Zhu's strings. A blade of light then pierced through the air as it shot out. The sound blade appeared like a wonderful arc that seemed, to the regular eyes, to have flown through the air to simultaneously destroy the 10 dark spheres without leaving behind a single trace.

Nina's abrupt standing in the spectator's grandstand was a bit unexpected, but now there were two. This second person who had stood up was the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts president, Violet Rank Spiritual Great Magister Ferguson.

"Magic-Martial Art combination." Ferguson's mouth produced a sound that brimmed with shock. He had the sharpest sense among the others present, so he clearly sensed Ye Yin Zhu had emitted a sound blade with magic that was not simple. The red was obviously from the arising spiritual magic power of the zither music while the yellow actually was pure and honest dou qi! What extremely shocked him was that the zither note and dou qi perfectly integrated to form a special energy. The Red Rank Dark Sphere magic's might was ranked first among similar divisions, but facing these soundblades, the 10 dark orbs were unexpectedly deflected continuously by Ye Yin Zhu's lightly plucked strings.

No one expected a situation like this to arise. Even the four girls behind Ye Yin Zhu were stunned. But in the next moment, their consciousness awoke from the sound of Ye Yin Zhu's zither.

It was the same song, << A Chinese Ghost Story >>, but Ye Yin Zhu's hands played it completely differently from Hai Yang. Faint distress, like the lingering aftertaste of an aged wine, the continuous zither's prolonged zither notes rose in spirals even though the volume was not loud. It clearly transmitted towards the ears of everyone on the scene and even through the defensive shield surrounding the training field towards the spectating students whose mood also

began to follow the undulations of the zither music.

Of the Divine Music division four females, Hai Yang had the highest cultivation, so she responded first. Her guzheng notes resonated clearly and brimmed with realism as they emerged in the wake of her hands brushing over the 21 guzheng strings, issuing a light dragon's roar that conformed to the zither music. Immediately, zither notes identical to Ye Yin Zhu's but slightly shaky began to rise. Lan Xi hadn't even looked at her own Jade Charm Zither in front of her because at this moment, her vision was completely focused on the top of Ye Yin Zhu's hands only to discover that his hands unexpectedly had only four fingers each.

The sound of various sized pearls hitting a jade was weaved into the rhythm of the music. This clear sound, reminiscent of a silver bottle being smashed, rang through the music. They piercingly entered the song and immediately made this << A Chinese Ghost Story >> somewhat somber and desolate. Meanwhile, prolonged, exquisite xiao notes resounded deeply and seemed to cause a sorrowful shroud to descend.

The Divine Music division's five members had actually revealed four types of musical instruments, emphasizing their Divine Music mage's ensemble performance skill.

Ensemble performance referred to the Divine Music mages playing an identical musical composition at the same time. Even if their magic ranks were not the same, so long as it ingeniously matched the musical composition it could display a layering effect.

Momentarily, four red rays of light mixed with Hai Yang's emerging deep orange radiance. Like a whirlpool being released, it flooded every nook and cranny of training field four. The most terrifying thing about a Divine Music mage's magic was that it couldn't be resisted. Without any magic or dou qi capable of obstructing the musical spirit attack, you could only rely on your own spiritual power's ability to take on the effects.

Just before the zither notes rang, apart from Yue Ming the four Dark Magic division students all didn't care too much. In front of the Divine Music division whose strongest was Orange Rank, even if their musical composition's effects

were expressed, they were confident they could rely on their own spiritual power to resist. When Ye Yin Zhu's soundblade destroyed their dark spheres, however, these Dark Magic division students became aware that the Divine Music division was in no way simple. With their chanting interrupted, they immediately condensed their magic power the moment they recovered and frantically launched numerous instantaneous Red Rank magic spells in the direction of Ye Yin Zhu's party of five.

In fact, Ye Yin Zhu's first issued zither note was not a traditional Divine Music mage's sonic boom. He truly couldn't issue a sonic boom as it required Green Rank capabilities. That first zither cry was from his own research on the sonic boom which used sound as foundation and dou qi as ignition. When originally facing that Indigo Rank mage Lu Fei Te, he used this skill to suddenly attack in order to win in the end.

Chapter 12 – Netherworld Snow Spirit (III)

A long blade constructed entirely of sound gently floated in the air above Ye Yin Zhu’s eight fingers. Although it was brimming with a corrosive and tyrannical offensive power, the Dark Magic was incapable of getting within five meters of Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu’s left hand left the Empty Valley, Momentum Transfer at the same time as his right hand left the Deep Valley, Flowing Spring gesture. “You are now also receiving my attack.” Four sound blades overlapped in mid air to form a meter-large symbol that swiftly headed towards the five Dark Magic division students. This mystical soundblade fluttered in the wind without receiving any power at all while at the same time changing directions at quick speeds as it evaded and slayed.

Ye Yin Zhu was well aware of his limits. Last time, when he killed Lu Fei Te and the others, he had taken advantage of his opponents and startled them by releasing Seven Killer Notes at full power while playing the zither. This technique combined both his dou qi and his zither magic to annihilate his opponents in one fell swoop. At this particular moment, however, he had restrained himself. After all, if he issued Seven Killer Notes with his current strength, he wouldn’t have any energy left over.

Suddenly, a thick black fog gushed out from Yue Ming’s chest, forming a black fog wall in the air. The meter long soundblade struck this dark magic fog. It quivered violently, but in the end, it blocked the blade’s attack.

“Split Shadow.” Yue Ming lowered her head and shouted loudly, her voice sounding somewhat out of breath. Even though she relied on magical equipment to produce this defensive magic, withstanding the full force of the four long sound blades used up an enormous amount of magic power.

The five Dark Magic division students each pulled a black pearl out of nowhere and crushed it all at once. Instantly, countless black silhouettes extended out. They each unexpectedly split into six silhouettes and rapidly spread out. The Divine Music division unexpectedly found themselves surrounded. Since they were unable to chant a spell, they relied on magical equipment to instantly

release this Yellow Rank magic – Dark Magic Split Shadow. The Dark Magic division was not like the destitute Water division.

This Split Shadow skill was very suitable in dealing with Ye Yin Zhu at this moment. None of the Dark Magic division's students, however, were able to resist the sound blades. Thus, they had suddenly released multiple doppelgangers that prevented Ye Yin Zhu from striking their real bodies. Sound blades were an extreme waste of dou qi and magic power, so naturally Ye Yin Zhu did not use it lightly. Fortunately, the song << A Chinese Ghost Story >> was finally a third of the way performed.

One third was exactly when Ye Yin Zhu's zither song began displaying its effects. The five Dark Magic division students almost simultaneously felt an intense sorrow rush forth from deep within their hearts. Unconsciously, they seemingly desired to listen to the music instead of continuing the match. The Split Shadow produced doppelgangers had already begun to grow blurry.

Yue Ming, after all, was a mage of equal rank to Ye Yin Zhu. In this critical moment, she suddenly bit her lower lip and, used the sting of pain to clear her head. Shouting loudly, she called out, "Come, my partner, Ming Xue."

A dark-blue magic Six-Point star appeared out of nowhere, and a large black figure emerged from within it. The graceful figure appeared to be a six or seven year old small girl floating in the air. Long, dark-blue hair drifted down her back, the length unexpectedly long as it passed her two feet. A pair of large black eyes brimmed with an icy air. Faint dark-blue rays of light unceasingly revolved around her body. The most bizarre thing was that her body appeared to actually be transparent, like clear crystal.

In the spectator's grandstand, Nina's complexion greatly changed as she involuntarily cried out, "Death Spirit growth-type magical beast, Netherworld Snow Spirit."

All growth-type magical beasts could evolve to sentient magical beast rank. It was just that the process was very long and challenging. The number of Death Spirit growth-type magical beasts was sparse and comparable with that of rank 9 gigantic dragons, let alone this specific Netherworld Snow Spirit. One must know, any growth-type magical beast that agreed to and signed a contract had

to have done so at a young age. Aside from being a rank 9 magical beast, a mature Netherworld Snow Spirit could also birth a single soul spirit in its lifetime. If someone wanted to get this soul spirit to agree to a soul contract, not only would they need to find a Netherworld Snow Spirit, but they would also need to ambush and defeat a mature Netherworld Snow Spirit, which was equivalent to a Violet Rank Dark Water dual-attribute Great Magister.

“Soul Scream.” Yue Ming cried, and the immature Netherworld Snow Spirit’s mouth produced a clear, piercing scream in response. The ear-piercing scream brimmed with grief and iciness. This abrupt sound immediately weakened the Divine Music division’s five person ensemble performance of << A Chinese Ghost Story >> song.

“Snow Dance.” Yue Ming once again issued an order. Immediately, dark-blue light began to appear and surround the Netherworld Snow Spirit’s body, gradually condensing into tiny snowflakes that danced in the air.

Exploiting this opportunity, Yue Ming hurriedly gathered together with her four Dark Magic division comrades, and the group began their spell chanting.

“God of Darkness..., you walked out from the void...” the first Dark Magic student chanted.

“Carrying profound sorrow..., take away my soul...” The second Dark Magic student unexpectedly continued the first student’s chant.

“Bring despair to my enemies..., let slaughter engulf the world...” The third student joined the unusual harmony, as if the spell was being chanted by one person. Each person who chanted the spell also radiated a large quantity of yellow light from their body, which condensed in the center of their five man formation.

“Swearing by my blood..., I use my soul as sacrifice...” Just as the fourth student finished the incantation, the three people’s gaping mouths simultaneously spewed mists of blood as the yellow rays of light condensed and immediately changed into a gloomy green light.

In the Spectator’s Grandstand. Ferguson said with surprise, “Overlapping chant, Dark Curse. This is an Advanced Dark Magic. Dean Ba Si Teng, the Dark Magic division new students this year are remarkable!” While he spoke, his violet

magic power already began to condense. As the institution's president, he didn't wish for casualties to appear in the Freshman Competition.

Not saying a word, the Dark Magic division Dean Ba Si Teng's mood could only be described as bitter and astringent. This Dark Curse was definitely an Advanced Dark Magic, but it was rare for a fifth year student to cast such a spell alone. This time, he had ingeniously designed this overlapping chant, of course, in preparation for an even more crucial point in the Freshman Competition. As a result, the Dark Magic division became a celebrity overnight. The one thing he didn't count for, however, was that he would be forced to use it after running into the so-called useless mages of the Divine Music division in the second match. Although he believed victory was already in their grasp regardless, he still did not want to prematurely reveal their strength.

"Dark Curse – Infernal Howl of Sorrow." Yue Ming completed the final line of the incantation. Instantly, the gloomy green radiance shrouded the five Dark Magic division students all at once. A matchless, inhuman, shrill scream enveloped the whole audience.

As the Dark Magic division students executed their curse, Ye Yin Zhu and the others came across big trouble. The dual-attribute Death Spirit growth-type magical beast Netherworld Snow Spirit brought about massive problems.

Even if it was still immature, this Netherworld Snow Spirit already surpassed rank 4 strength. The dark-blue snowflakes not only brimmed with an icy aura like a sharp blade, but even more frightening was that it contained corrosion magic. Just a little touch and the corrosive nature could cause damage!

They never stopped playing << A Chinese Ghost Story >>. Ye Yin Zhu knew that a Divine Music mage's music was absolutely effective against any and all living beings with souls. Even Death Spirit magical beasts were no exception. Sound blades couldn't obstruct all the snowflakes, so at a crucial moment, he released the Divine Celestial Protection to envelop the party of five and protect them from the dark-blue snowflakes' cutting edges. At the same time, dou qi immediately accumulated at his fingertips, his hand positioning slightly changing as the zither music increased in volume twofold in order to suppress the Netherworld Snow Spirit's piercing scream.

Chapter 12 – Netherworld Snow Spirit (IV)

Accompanying the deep, distant zither notes, his graceful and low voice rose among the party of the five ensemble performance.

“One’s time on earth

Is like a dream, an endless journey

Which allows the wind and frost to leave traces upon the face

In the world of mortals

This beautiful dream has numerous paths to follow

Seeking love on this fantastical journey

Following a boundless and indistinct path.”

The first time the zither song emerged, it was done to conform with Hai Yang’s music. Now, Ye Yin Zhu could reveal for the first time the zither song’s own formidable power. The zither’s melodies along with the singing voices was fully appealing, seeping through everyone’s minds. The Dark Magic division’s four students, in addition to Yue Ming, just recently completed their incantation which temporarily provided the outstanding power of a God. The four students in the midst of the zither song’s spiritual attack had already completely lost. Tears unwillingly flowed out as they lost their ability to fight.

What was most bizarre was the Netherworld Snow Spirit’s reaction, who was closest to Ye Yin Zhu.

The front side of Ming Xue’s crystal body was battered by the zither song, appearing to mimic the rhythm of sound waves rippling out. In the air, the number of dark-blue snowflakes were clearly reduced. The most fantastic thing was that her two deadly eyes unexpectedly displayed her fluctuating mood. A touch of faint sadness appeared upon her completely flawless, attractive face as her body floated slowly moved forward. The wind seemingly pushed her to arrive in front of Ye Yin Zhu’s body.

The Dark Magic division’s students, excluding Yue Ming, had already been completely immersed in the zither song and lost their fighting capabilities. Their overlapping chanted Dark Curse had been thoroughly completed, however. An immense black magic Six-Point Star appeared silently in front of Yue Ming’s body. Immediately, countless hissing sounds rang from the magic Six-Point Star.

A stream of cruel green light seemed to be struggling to emerge from hell. It was followed by a hissing sound that emerged from the black Six-Point Star, which earth-shatteringly rushed towards the Divine Music division’s five students. The magical color indicated it had already reached the Intermediate Level Green Rank to one’s surprise. The combined might of four Yellow Rank

students' overlapping chants actually could be formidable in such a way. Ye Yin Zhu and his companions couldn't help their changed expressions when they saw this.

"Yin Zhu, be careful..." Sura's voice rang loudly, assisted by dou qi.

Ye Yin Zhu no longer could attend to Ming Xue's attacks that flew towards him. Knowing this, his clear black eyes brimmed with determination as he knew that he could absolutely not retreat. Behind him were Hai Yang and the three girls. He could only rely on his own power now to resist the Dark Magic division's final attack. Instantly, Ye Yin Zhu's eyes changed colors to a deep red as a violently strong dark red magic aura surged out. His spiritual power momentarily broke through his limit. His Divine Celestial Protection defense's power increased according to his highest level of strength.

Dou qi restrained and not scattered, both hands, which were concealed within his sleeves, had already become a topaz color. << A Chinese Ghost Story >>'s music paused, however, as his eight fingers stopped plucking the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance's seven strings. As his magic power and dou qi upgraded to the highest state, waves of fatigue began assailing his brain.

Ye Yin Zhu knew the Life Guardian on his wrist could be used to absolutely protect him. It was not something the Dark Curse could break. His natural lofty and unyielding character, however, did not want to use Life Guardian as he knew that if he excessively depended on the Life Guardian like that, then how could he face even greater tribulations in the future?. Therefore, unless it was absolutely essential, he could not activate it lightly.

Dark Curse Infernal Howl of Sorrow conjured 10 ghosts. Even with Yue Ming their strength couldn't completely display this Advanced Dark Magic's power, but it was still considerable in might. Training field four was filled with a hissing, mournful sadness that brimmed with the oppressive power of the Dark Magic elemental waves. The large pressure already caused the girls, excluding Hai Yang, behind Ye Yin Zhu to become different shades simultaneously.

As Ye Yin Zhu was condensing all of his energy in preparation to deal with the Dark Curse, a clash which would determine the outcome of the battle, a bizarre scene suddenly emerged. Floating by Ye Yin Zhu's side was Ming Xue who had for

some unknown period of time appeared there. Her two big deadly eyes, which clearly illustrated her mood, began to appear more and more human. Seemingly deciding on something, Ming Xue's body suddenly flew across as she silently moved to block Ye Yin Zhu's front, causing a lag in her initial intention of mobilizing all of her strength to strike Ye Yin Zhu's mind.

Without any stir in the wind, her long dark blue hair surged automatically behind Ming Xue's back, forming a gigantic circular protective screen. Her body was wrapped in a black aura, seemingly like an enormous black hole whose intense vacuum power brimmed with an icy aura.

Those ghosts that flew out of the Black Six-Point Star issued a frightened screech as the cruel green rays of light undulated violently. They seemed to be afraid of something, but facing the black aura released from Ming Xue's body, these ghosts created by the Dark Curse unexpectedly had no way to resist. Like a green arrow, Ming Xue's black hole wildly engulfed their existence.

Yue Ming was completely dumbfounded. She could not understand how her own scheme to release the Dark Magic division's most powerful magical attack could unexpectedly be obstructed by her own magical beast. Although she could clearly sense Ming Xue and her spiritual connection, at this time, she had lost control of Ming Xue. Because she signed a Master-Slave contract with her magical beast, it was nearly impossible for this to occur.

The still taciturn Dark Magic division Dean Ba Si Teng was finally unable to continue being seated as he startledly stood up. His aged face was full of shock. A magical beast rejecting their master's control, what did this mean? Could it be that this time it rebelled? Originally he believed victory was in their grasp, but unexpectedly, at the most pivotal moment, this kind of change occurred. He couldn't really believe it.

The four girls behind Ye Yin Zhu were also stupefied. << A Chinese Ghost Story >> song had finished. A subtle feeling arose within Hai Yang's being. Of the Divine Music division's five competitors, her spiritual power cultivation was second only to Ye Yin Zhu. She vaguely sensed Ming Xue's change and feared that her own five man ensemble performance music had an enormous correlation.

Casting Dark Curse was extremely difficult, but it was swallowed up

extraordinarily fast. In merely several breaths' time, those gloomy green ghosts already completely vanished from sight, the black Six-Point Star in front of Yue Ming's body closing. Because of the excessive consumption of spiritual power and the damage inflicted mentally, Yue Ming's body instantly fell to the ground. She relied on her magical staff to barely support her body from fully collapsing.

Ming Xue floated back beside Ye Yin Zhu. After Ming Xue swallowed the Dark Curse, her body apparently somewhat stiffened. In a short period of time, she appeared to have grown. Originally she looked to be six to seven years old, but she appeared to be eight to nine years old. This mostly caused Yue Ming's heart to emanate a cold air as her eyes rested on Ming Xue with a pondering light. One must know, the growth-type Netherworld Snow at present was at most a magical beast between the fourth and fifth rank. Such thoughts would only emerge from a rank 7 or higher sentient magical beast.

In the spectator's grandstand, Ferguson's brows creased. Thoughtfully, he said, "This Netherworld Snow Spirit appears to have evolved."

Chapter 13 – Behemoth (I)

As Ming Xue began swallowing the Dark Curse, Ye Yin Zhu already closed his eyes. Now, the corner of his mouth displayed a trace of a faint smile as his condensed dou qi and magic power slowly dispersed. Due to the recent preparation he made in order to use all of his strength to either release an attack or at least suffer a certain level of elemental backlash, he spat out a mouthful of blood to the side.

“You, what did you do to Ming Xue?” Yue Ming, somewhat frightened, opened her eyes to look at Ye Yin Zhu who was by Ming Xue’s side.

Slowly opening his eyes, Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes, like before, were crystal-clear and didn’t reflect the elemental backlash his body had suffered, nor the fatigue. Slightly smiling, he said, “I didn’t do anything. I can only say that our music can influence you and magical beasts at the same time. As long as a creature has a soul, its mood will be influenced by the music. Be more concerned about your magical beast, she seems to be unhappy following you. If you cannot have her sincerely follow you, it would be eternally impossible for her to become your best partner.”

Yue Ming stared despondently at Ye Yin Zhu. Suddenly, her eyes flashed with a cold light as she shouted, “Ming Xue, attack him!” She was convinced that if Ming Xue didn’t change sides, their Dark Magic division would have already attained victory. At the same time, she was also not convinced that her magical beast unexpectedly wouldn’t obey her commands.

Ming Xue floated in place and looked at Ye Yin Zhu next to her before looking back at Yue Ming. In a very human gesture, she lowered her head. Facing Yue Ming, she shook her head.

“You, you won’t attack him?” This time Yue Ming was completely lifeless, her good-looking face without a single trace of color.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled faintly at Ming Xue by his side and said, “Go back.”

Ming Xue looked at Ye Yin Zhu and surprisingly bowed respectfully to him. Two somewhat shaky words exited Ming Xue's mouth. "Thank...you..." Her delicate human body changed directions in the air as her long dark blue hair wrapped around Xue Ming, allowing her to disappear from sight in a dark blue speck of light.

Yue Ming's gaze towards Ye Yin Zhu became incomparably complicated as her magical beast not only didn't listen to her, it instead listened and obeyed her opponent's command. At this very moment, all that existed in her ice cold heart was an inexhaustible hatred for Ye Yin Zhu. Her grandfather had put his heart and soul into raising Ming Xue. It was not easy finding a strong magical beast. Once Ming Xue matured to rank 7 or higher and Yue Ming's magical rank improved, they could contend in strength with the dragon cavalry. However, this perfect dream was all shattered by this male student from the Divine Music division standing before her eyes.

"Miss Yue Ming, my mother told me that you have to treat girls with respect. Therefore, I will not attack you again. Please, I ask you to concede." Ye Yin Zhu somewhat helplessly looked at Yue Ming. In fact, he also couldn't completely understand why Ming Xue became like this, but his keen sense allowed him to distinctly become aware of Yue Ming's profound hostility.

Ye Yin Zhu's good intentions towards Yue Ming, when spoken, became exceptionally ear-piercing. Yue Ming, because of the overuse of her spiritual power and mind, was unable to resist the shock. Her vision turned dark, and she fainted on stage.

Training field four fell silent. For a full minute, close to eight thousand match spectators continued to watch soundlessly.

"Divine Music division wins." The referee finally recovered his senses. The match, full of ups and downs, finally ended. The never thought highly of Divine Music division yet again created a miracle. The Dark Magic division which possessed five Yellow Rank mages unexpectedly lost, losing to the one Orange Rank and four Red Rank mages the Divine Music division had assembled. Any person would say that this victory was inconceivable. Even the Divine Music division's Dean Nina, upon seeing the emergence of the Netherworld Snow Spirit, also had no delusions of victory. In the end, victory had quickly arrived.

When Ye Yin Zhu walked away from the training field, everyone looked at him with gazes that became somewhat peculiar. Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts' students were all elite and could see that the crux of this match's victory was this little blade of grass among ten thousand flowers, the Divine Music division's first male student. He obstructed the Dark Magic division's instantaneous magic with miraculous sound blades, which was also the first time this officially occurred in the history of the mainland arena.

President Ferguson profoundly stared at the distant Ye Yin Zhu and didn't say anything before he turned around and left. The Dark Magic division teachers' faces were gloomy as they left to rescue and give medical treatment to the Dark Magic division competitors who were injured by the Divine Music division's music. Their moods were the completely opposite of Nina's, who could hardly restrain her excitement. How many years had the Divine Music division been the best division at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts but still ignored by everyone? At this very moment, they became the focus of the institution.

So to say, the Divine Music division's first match had them prevailing over the Water division by relying on magical equipment and some luck. However, this match against the Dark Magic division was a genuine battle. No one doubted the Divine Music division's strength anymore.

"Divine Music division..., victorious..., Divine Music division..., victorious...!" Joyous shouts echoed again and again, especially from the eight beautiful first-year ladies of the Divine Music division who shouted loudly and excitedly even more.

Ye Yin Zhu with great difficulty squeezed his way through the cheering crowd while simultaneously guarding the four girls and the other Divine Music division first-year beautiful ladies in the return to the Divine Music division school building.

"Yin Zhu, you are really impressive. Just a moment ago, how did you do that? What was that wind blade-like attack?" Xue Ling excitedly asked, her big, beautiful eyes sparkling like small, shining stars.

Although Ye Yin Zhu was simple, he also knew he could not casually speak of the sound blade secret. For a moment, he didn't know how he should reply until

Nina appeared. “Ye Yin Zhu, come with me.” Nina’s complexion appeared to be quite serene, but her shining eyes betrayed her excited mood.

“Oh.” Replying, he followed Nina and left the classroom.

As the Dean of Divine Music division, Nina possessed her own office. This huge, luxurious office’s size could almost be compared to the classroom. Every kind of magical ornament was elegantly arranged on the office walls. Nina pointed a finger at her sofa in front of the office table and said, “Sit.”

As this was the first time being here, Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t help but inquisitively look around at his surroundings. The texture of the sofa seat was soft and comfy. As the match made him tired, this comfort seemed to gradually take it away.

“Grandma Nina, why did you bring me here?” Ye Yin Zhu probingly asked.

After a moment of hesitation, Nina suddenly lifted her head and began to speak, her sight burning luminously as she fixed her gaze into Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes. “Tell me, just now you released sound blades. Was that a combination of dou qi and magic?”

“Uh...” Ye Yin Zhu hesitated before slowly nodding his head. He said, “Yes.” ‘Zi was right. My sound blade sooner or later would appear on the mainland. Although other people cannot know this secret, this sound blade is a type of special attack that doesn’t need to be deeply concealed.’

Nina somewhat got up from her seat excitedly, but very quickly she somewhat disappointedly sat down again. Sighing, she said, “Yin Zhu, so, with that said, you combined magic and dou qi together.”

“Basically.” Ye Yin Zhu scratched his head. In fact, he himself didn’t know whether this was considered to be a magic and dou qi combination.

Nina wrinkled her brows. “Has that old bastard Qin Shang gone crazy? Don’t tell me he wants to ruin you?”

“Eh? Grandma Nina, why do you say this?” Ye Yin Zhu stared at her, shocked.

Nina unhappily clarified, “How can a low, inexpensive martial art skill compare to our noble magic? Especially supremely noble Divine Music magic. Your music utilized a mix of martial arts. Although it can get rid of the slow effectiveness

weak point of the Divine Music mage's music, it also makes your music no longer pure. This won't benefit you in the future. Could it be that Qin Shang doesn't know this?"

Ye Yin Zhu somewhat blankly said, "I didn't know this. From childhood, Grandfather Qin taught me this kind of cultivation, and there doesn't seem to be anything bad."

Chapter 13 – Behemoth (II)

Nina groaned. “Magic and martial arts combination can display an awfully large, formidable power, but because it’s not really specialized, the cultivation speed reduces substantially after the Green Rank. Perhaps you can be successful, but you must invest a huge amount of effort that is several times greater than what a single mage and warrior must invest. And once you reach Violet Rank, a mage-warrior is not necessarily favorable over that of a warrior or mage.”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “I don’t know if what you are saying is correct, but I believe Grandfather Qin would never harm me.”

Nina looked at Ye Yin Zhu with a very serene but also very persistent gaze. For a moment, she didn’t know what to say. From her heart’s perspective, she naturally wouldn’t doubt Qin Shang’s teachings. After all, Qin Shang was the mainland’s best Divine Music mage. In the domain of Divine Music mages, it was too hard for her to compare. She really couldn’t imagine, however, why Qin Shang allowed Ye Yin Zhu to select this magic-martial arts path. In fact, she already knew that Ye Yin Zhu’s current cultivation was not ordinary in concerns to magic and martial arts cultivation.

“Well, let’s not talk about this first. What happened during today’s match? Why did that Netherworld Snow Spirit change sides during the battle?” This question was the real reason why Nina sought out Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu forced a smile and said, “I don’t know either. Our music must have influenced it.”

Nina shook her head and argued, “No. Music does influence magical beasts; this is what we Divine Music mages excel in. After all, magical beasts for the most part do not have strong spiritual power. For some rudimentary magical beasts, we can even completely make them lose their combat ability through the use of our music, but today, you confronted a Netherworld Snow Spirit that, when matured, is comparable to a rank 9 sentient magical beast – one of the Death Spirit class. The damage our music does to it is minimal. Even if you can

influence its mood, it is impossible to control it to change sides!”

Ye Yin Zhu automatically answered, “Maybe, our song selection today, << A Chinese Ghost Story >>, has some correlation.”

Nina’s eyes brightened. “<< A Chinese Ghost Story >> song, a Death Spirit class Netherworld Snow Spirit. This correlation..., apparently, our Divine Music division has a new topic we must research. I must think carefully on this. If hereafter every Divine Music mage can cause an opponent’s magical beast to change sides, in that case we can even face the dragon cavalry at last...” With this thought, she couldn’t help excitedly dancing with joy. Her eyes gave off brilliant rays of light, unexpectedly even resembling Xue Ling from earlier.

“Good, Yin Zhu you should return early to rest. Restore your spiritual power properly. Tomorrow you still must compete in a match.” With this new goal in mind, Nina immediately ignored Ye Yin Zhu, being entirely immersed in her excited thoughts.

Leaving Nina’s office, Ye Yin Zhu didn’t return to the classroom. Just recently the victorious match made the entire Divine Music division excited. All but some ignored Ye Yin Zhu’s energy consumption, however. As the general, he alone blocked all the attacks of the enemy party of five and also the Netherworld Snow Spirit. All of this consumed an extremely large amount of dou qi and spiritual power. If he didn’t cultivate his Pure Zither Heart since he was a child and if his foundation wasn’t so deep, he feared he would not have been able to hold on. Especially when he gathered all of his strength for a final attack and didn’t even have the chance to release it; the elemental backlash alone had already given him trauma. Now his brain was continuously hit with waves of fatigue. Thus, after exiting Nina’s office, Ye Yin Zhu walked out and immediately returned to his dormitory to rest.

“Yin Zhu.” Just as he left the Divine Music division school building, Ye Yin Zhu heard someone call him.

Sura appeared out of some unknown place, his complexion appearing somewhat pale. His gaze towards Ye Yin Zhu also became somewhat strange.

“Sura, what’s wrong with you? Are you sick?” Ye Yin Zhu raised his hand with great difficulty to feel Sura’s forehead.

“I’m not sick.” Sura shook off Ye Yin Zhu’s hand. He said with a strange voice, “Congratulations, you won.”

Ye Yin Zhu forced a smile and said, “There’s nothing to congratulate. In fact, luck made up a significant part of it. Sura, you don’t look well.”

Sura gnashed his teeth and said, “I look fine. Ye Yin Zhu, I want to kill you.” His petite body momentarily exploded with an incomparably astonishing speed as he immediately closed the distance between the two of them. Because Ye Yin Zhu used up a significant portion of his energy, his reaction time had declined substantially. Before he could react, Sura’s hands already clutched his neck. Because of the height difference, he was entirely on Ye Yin Zhu’s body.

Yin Zhu felt an ice-cold, clammy feeling on his neck. Sura’s hands were very cold, and despite his vicious appearance, he didn’t really exert himself.

“Sura, what are you doing?” Yin Zhu cried out in alarm.

Sura’s eyes brimmed with a complicated light and even a layer of mist. He violently released Ye Yin Zhu. “You, I hate you. Why did your Divine Music division win, why...”

“I...” Just as Sura released his grip, Ye Yin Zhu’s body was suddenly hit with a spell of dizziness. The over consumption and elemental backlash finally showed its effect. As his eyes blacked out, his body pitched forward and collapsed.

Sura’s heart was startled by this new complication, and he cried out in alarm as he suddenly saw the direction of Ye Yin Zhu’s fall. Before Sura could react, Ye Yin Zhu’s body had already knocked against him. To save himself, as Ye Yin Zhu toppled over, both his hands unconsciously extended forward to grab anything to support his body. As he hit Sura’s body, his right hand coincidentally grabbed Sura’s chest. His palm tightened as he leaned up against Sura in order to prop up his own body.

“Sura, as it turns out, your pectoral muscles are quite robust.” These were Ye Yin Zhu’s final words before he blacked out.

Holding up Ye Yin Zhu’s body, Sura’s complexion became red and then white. A pitch-black dagger unknowingly appeared in his grasp. He stared at Ye Yin Zhu before clutching at his own chest with his hand. His heart hesitated for a while,

unable to thrust his dagger out.



The Northern Wasteland occupied over a quarter of the mainland. Located in the most northern part of the mainland, it remained bitter cold throughout the year. Along the Northern Wasteland's southern border was the Ascoli Kingdom to the southwest, the Milan Empire to the south, and the Florence Kingdom to the southeast. In order for the human countries to defend against the Northern Wasteland beastmen, a massive military force was deployed to cover the entire border. Equally, the beastmen also always guarded against human invasion. Therefore, they built three fortifications, one for each human country. The Ascoli Kingdom bordered on Solomon Stronghold, the Milan Empire bordered on the Mjolnir Stronghold, and the Florence Kingdom bordered on the Mars Stronghold.

In the eyes of the humans, the beastmen were savages from an unauthentic descent. But in fact, despite beastmen commonly having low intelligence, the higher level beastmen's intelligence were not inferior in any respect to the human race. The great majority of the beastmen nobility's figures were exceedingly similar to humans in appearance.

Zi stood atop a hill five miles away from the Mjolnir stronghold and looked into the distance at the 66.6 meter high wall, his eyes gleaming with an ice-cold light. Both of his hands gripped the heavy iron stick supporting his body. He had stood there without moving for no less than an hour.

"Ten years, I didn't expect I would return to Mjolnir one day. You wouldn't expect that the child you chased after to kill has already returned. From the far north to the far south, returning from the far south to the far north, Zi's rage will melt the ice and snow of the Northern Wasteland in the end."

Two terrifying rays of light shot out from Zi's electrifying eyes. The muscles of his arms abruptly thickened, exposing blue veins. No one would suspect that this pair of arms packed an explosive strength.

Chapter 13 – Behemoth (IV)

Sura snorted. “I don’t care. Anyways, I lost all the money, so this is the last meal. We don’t even have enough money for the next meal! Since you made me lose all that money, you should compensate me for the loss.”

Looking at the tears still on Sura’s face, Ye Yin Zhu really didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. He sighed lightly as the space ring on his hand faintly glimmered. The last remaining gold coins appeared in his hand. “I’ll give all of this to you. This is all I have.”

Sura stared blankly. He didn’t expect Ye Yin Zhu would not only not blame him for losing all the money, but he would also go so far as to hand over the rest of his funds. There wasn’t even one rebuke.

Taking the gold coin, he slowly nodded his head. Sura’s expression appeared to have slightly changed, his eyes unconsciously becoming soft.

“Hurry, eat. Next time, don’t gamble. These few gold coins should be enough for us to eat for several days.” Ye Yin Zhu spontaneously shoved a steamed roll into Sura’s hands, guiding Sura into sitting down opposite him.

Looking at the steamed roll placed in his hand, Sura stayed still for quite a while.

“Yin Zhu.”

“Hmm?”

“You are a good man.” Sura softly sighed.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled faintly and said, “I think so, too.”

Sura forced a grin and continued, “But how will we manage in the days to come? Everything in Milan are expensive. This money will at most feed us for one more month. I lost dozens of gold coins! That’s several dozen gold coins!”

Ye Yin Zhu said helplessly, “Then I also don’t know what to do. I must become the Freshman Competition champion. That way, I’ll have money.”

Sura snorted and said, “You think it’s that easy? You’ve already seen how strong the Dark Magic division is. But out of the nine magic divisions—oh, counting your Divine Music division, it’s ten divisions now. Out of the ten magic divisions, the Dark Magic division can at best only place third or fourth. The Wind division, the Spatial division, and the Light division are in no way inferior to them. And without a doubt, even stronger than them are the Spiritual division and the Summon division. Miracles don’t always happen. Even if your Divine Music division has some strength, it might not be possible to keep winning in the later competitions.”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “I have faith in myself.”

Sura sent him a blank glance. “But I have no faith in you.”

Ye Yin Zhu bitterly laughed and said, “What can I do? Gold isn’t going to fall from the sky.”

Sura’s eyes suddenly brightened. He said, “Yin Zhu, how about we go out and get jobs? Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts emphasizes more on having the students self-study. This means there are only three days of class every week. We can make use of the free time to work. If we each find a common job, we should have enough to pay for our college expenses from now on. Don’t forget, we still need to pay the tuition next term. A year’s tuition can be a hundred gold coins! That’s not a small amount.”

Hearing Sura bring up the tuition, Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t help recalling Hai Yang and his debt to her. He nodded and replied, “Yes. So what are we going to do?”

Sura shook his head and said, “I also don’t know. How about this—if you still want to proceed with the competition, in any case, I have no problems with that. For the next few days I will start searching. If there is a suitable job, you can come along with me.”

Ye Yin zhu nodded and agreed. “Alright.”

Sura mischievously laughed and said, “But our future wages can simply be under my control. It’ll save you from spending recklessly. You’re a person who is too wasteful.”

Ye Yin Zhu remained silent and stared at him. He thought, ‘Like you didn’t lose

all of the savings earlier.’ Even though he thought of this, the words didn’t emerge from his mouth. Instead, he agreed to Sura’s request. For him, money was not an important thing. Food to eat and a place to live were sufficient.

When the match began the next day, Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was gifted with a beautiful scene. Eighty fifth-year students of the Divine Music division formed a super-cheering squad, having already appeared earlier at the side of the playing field.

While the Divine Music division weren’t the favorites to win the competition, they were certainly ranked first in popularity. This was the strength of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts’ best division. The number of spectators on the other playing fields, in comparison to the Divine Music division’s playing field, could only be described as few. Both students and teachers came to the Divine Music division match’s field to watch the battle. Even if they didn’t think highly of the Divine Music division, they didn’t really care about the outcome of the match. It was always good to see beautiful woman.

Ah, eighty beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division! Even if not every one of them was a remarkable beauty, the title of ‘beautiful lady’ could be held by at least half of them. Among them, several were even described as peerless beauties. In addition, many of them were definitely of noble background. Who wouldn’t want to be able to gain the attention of these beautiful ladies? Coming early to watch the Divine Music division match, they could all first satisfy their eyes. After all, this was the first time the students of the Divine Music division had collectively mobilized together.

Ever since the first day of the competition, every period before the Divine Music division matches began, a girl with bright eyes and white teeth watched from the best seat in the front row. She was dressed in a short white skirt and blue cardigan. A voice, melodious and touching, brimmed with an alluring power that shouted loudly, “Divine Music division must win!”

It was unsure whether it was due to the Divine Music division’s newfound strength or due to the cheering squad’s moral support that the Divine Music division won three consecutive matches in the following two days of the tournament. They prevailed over the Earth division, the Fire division, and the Light division. Among these, they only ran across some trouble in the Light

division match. Still, the Light division general didn't at all resemble the Dark Magic division's general Yue Ming, as they did not possess a growth-type magical beast. Even if the general was an Advanced Level Yellow Rank, they still couldn't get rid of Ye Yin Zhu's sound blades and his Divine Celestial Protection defense. Because of that, they fell under the Divine Music division's ensemble music.

For a moment, because the Divine Music division unexpectedly had a 5 games 5 victory performance, they were tied with the Spiritual division and the Summon division for the first place magic department's Freshman Competition. Their next opponent, the Wind division, was led by the talented female mage Luo Lan who had initially issued the challenge towards Ye Yin Zhu during the freshman registration.

Seated in the spectator's grandstand, Dean Nina appeared somewhat thin and pallid, her brows tightly knitted. Even if the Divine Music division already won three matches in the past two days, she still hadn't expressed a smile.

'Why doesn't it work? Obviously my magical power is much stronger than that boy Ye Yin Zhu's...Why can't my xiao music control an opponent's magical beast? Don't tell me he was just merely lucky that day?'

"Dean Nina, what are you thinking about? The match is about to begin." A mild voice resounded, pulling Nina away from her train of thought. Raising her head to look up, she saw that President Ferguson had appeared by her side without her knowing when. No one knew if it was because the Divine Music division's sudden appearance as the next dark horse, but Ferguson would unexpectedly came to every match. Each time, he calmly watched the entire match and then left quietly after it was over.

"Hello, President. I was only thinking about some issues related to musical composition," Nina faintly responded.

Ferguson smiled and said, "The Divine Music division matches have indeed opened my eyes. It is a pity that it is awfully difficult to advance through the Divine Music mage ranks. Otherwise, if used in any battle, they would inflict serious damage upon their opponents." Indeed, the Divine Music division's greatest complication was not the duration of the music, but rather the difficulty of its cultivation. Only when practicing performance music would a Divine Music

mage's magical power and cultivation improve. This was significantly more difficult than the simple meditation of the average mage. Otherwise, it was unlikely for their teachers to be that low a rank like Bi Ji. Divine Music division's five-year education system dictated that as long as a student's strength advanced to the Orange Rank, the student could graduate. This standard was significantly lower than other magic divisions.

Chapter 14 – The Promised Battle (I)

Nina lightly exclaimed, “Starting from the Yellow Rank, improvement of a Divine Music mage’s strength depends on one’s talent. Without talent, even great effort would be meaningless. Otherwise, it wouldn’t be known as the most useless vocation. But I have always believed that a talented Divine Music mage can become the most powerful mage on the mainland. One day, there will be another power other than the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda,—the Divine Music mage pagoda.

Ferguson was alarmed and sent an urgent glance towards Nina. “Praise Blue Dias. Dean Nina, don’t speak these words again.”

Nina also realized her slip of tongue. Trembling with fear within her heart, she kept silent.

Ferguson’s vision moved off the stage towards the Divine Music division cheering squad in the stands. Those shining white thighs made even Ferguson unable to help but quietly swallow a mouthful of saliva. In fact, although he wasn’t of a young age anymore, when he saw the beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division, he couldn’t help but feel somewhat envious of the youngsters.

“Ye Yin Zhu, go! The Divine Music division is the most powerful.” A voice as rich as pearls and jades echoed from the front of the Divine Music division’s cheering squad. A girl brandished a special flower bouquet in her hand as she shouted loudly with excitement. So to say, the audience had at least 5000 males. Then, of these 5000 males, at least 95% of their gazes fell upon this girl. Among their number, more than 70% were constantly swallowing their saliva as they stared with shining eyes.

As the captain of the Divine Music division’s cheering squad, they absolutely must pay attention to the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts’ most beautiful woman – Xiang Luan.

Xiang Luan wasn’t even her name, but her title. No one knew her real name. Even in the institution’s student resources, her name had been replaced with Xiang Luan—the name of a flower that symbolizes happiness with its one of a

kind beauty. Her appearance was serene, being both harmonious and generous; the perfect embodiment of the Milan Empire—a country which represented freedom, optimism, and honesty. She was the Milan Empire’s national beauty. All the Milan citizens loved her, calling her ‘Golden Lily.’

Hearing this voice while already standing on stage, Ye Yin Zhu involuntarily cast his gaze in its direction. Although this wasn’t the first time he saw Xiang Luan, he still felt his heart speed up once again upon seeing her.

Dressed in the same white skirt and blue top, Xiang Luan possessed a one of a kind, earthly beauty. She was approximately 1.7 meters tall and had the perfect golden proportions. Slender, her smooth and slender thighs were half exposed. Long strawberry blonde hair cascaded in waves over her shoulders and down her back. Her clear lilac eyes glimmered, as if reflecting the sunlight.

Her body soars lightly like a startled swan

Gracefully like a dragon in flight

In splendor brighter than the autumn chrysanthemum

In bloom more flourishing than the pine in spring

Dim as the moon mantled in filmy clouds

Restless as snow whirled by the driving wind

Gaze far off from a distance: She sparkles like the sun rising from morning mists

Press closer to examine: She flames like the lotus flower topping the green wave ¹

Any man who looked at her heartwarming appearance was incapable of shifting his gaze. The rest of the beautiful ladies from the Divine Music division stood behind her all possessed radiant appearances that fell short of her.

The first time he met Xiang Luan, Ye Yin Zhu’s brain blanked out. He saw many beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division, but only Xiang Luan made his heart race and his face red hot. The feeling Xiang Luan gave him was completely different. That appearance was engraved deeply within his heart.

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu once more gazed into Xiang Luan's encouraging eyes. Unconsciously, his whole body seemed to brim with endless strength and surging, boundless confidence.

'She's looking at me; she's cheering me on? Win. I must lead the Divine Music division to victory.'

"Hey, stop looking! Haven't you stared long enough!" Xue Ling's rebuking voice roused Ye Yin Zhu from his daze.

"Ah! I..." The pure Ye Yin Zhu couldn't stop his face from burning up.

Xue Ling groaned. Moving closer to Ye Yin Zhu's side, she whispered, "Stop looking. It's useless to look. Do you know how many men are chasing after Senior Xiang Luan in our institution? To say the least, even if she really took a fancy to you, you, unfortunately, could not enjoy it."

"Why?" Ye Yin Zhu automatically asked.

Xue Ling elaborated, "Don't tell me you want to be the target of our entire institution? It's time to compete. Focus."

Ye Yin Zhu sucked in a deep breath. No longer looking at Xiang Luan to the side, he regathered his mind and examined his opponent across from him. He looked at Luo Lan again. Today, she wore a Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts school uniform. Although she was very beautiful, Ye Yin Zhu was practically immune to her beauty after meeting the stunning Xiang Luan and the numerous beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division. He originally joined the Freshman Competition to prove himself; Luo Lan could be said to be the originator of this desire.

As the Wind division general, Luo Lan's complexion appeared somewhat gloomy. She indeed didn't expect that Ye Yin Zhu could actually lead Divine Music division to participate in the competition. Not only that, he also acquired a perfect victory record.

"Luo Lan, we meet again." As the Divine Music division general, Ye Yin Zhu walked up to face Luo Lan.

Luo Lan coldly snorted. "I didn't expect a pauper like you to have skill, but your victory streak ends here. I'm personally going to show you what true magic and

true strength are.”

These days, Ye Yin Zhu had already learned many things at college. In addition to his naturally gentle disposition, his childhood musical education, mentality, and temperament made him all in all difficult to infuriate. Smiling slightly, he said, “Then let’s begin. We choose team battle.” Instead of pointless arguing, he would use facts to prove that ability was everything.

The five student competitors of the Wind division were all male, except Luo Lan. In the split second after the referee formally declared the start of the match, five spheres of yellow light immediately shone simultaneously. Following after the Dark Magic division and Light division, the Divine Music division again ran across a situation where their five competitors were all Yellow Rank.

Luo Lan and two students had reached the Primary Level Yellow Rank while the other two students had reached the highest level in the Wind division. Wind magic didn’t have the strongest offensive magic, but it absolutely had the best agility magic. Sharp, ear-piercing whistles broke the silence within the first few moments of the match. Ten red wind blades scattered out from the magical staves of the five competitors, flying towards Ye Yin Zhu and his team like an avalanche.

Milky white rays of light shone brilliantly. Just as in the past, the Divine Celestial Protection quietly manifested, protecting Ye Yin Zhu’s team of five. Today they chose to play the song << White Snow >>. Like before, the song brimmed with sorrow. To a Divine Music mage, it was easiest to influence others and to channel spiritual power to control their opponents’ moods through sad songs. In case their magical rank was lower compared to other magic departments, Nina arranged for them to play sad songs throughout the competition.

In order to withstand the attacks of the opponents, Ye Yin Zhu took several precautions. The first notes of << White Snow >> arose from Hai Yang’s guzheng, the clear and bright guzheng notes echoing immediately.

Suddenly, the air changed as the wind blades advanced towards them. When the ten wind blades were only a few meters away from them, they suddenly changed directions. They collided against each other at high speeds. Their sharp,

ear-piercing clashes immediately disrupted the rhythm of the music. Hai Yang slowed down her hands when << White Snow >> was unexpectedly cut short in a split second.

Xue Ling, Lan Xi, and Kong Que's complexions changed. This song was the Divine Music division's only chance to win. It was clearly not a good omen for the whistling wind to disrupt it the moment they began.

The wind blades colliding in the sky didn't stop. The ear-piercing, whistling wind continued to resonate. Apart from Luo Lan and the other Advanced Level Yellow Rank Wind division student, the remaining three students continuously casted instantaneous wind blades. They didn't attack the Divine Celestial Protection, instead creating unceasing collisions against each other outside of the protection's bounds. Through the wind blade collisions and the violent cacophony, they cut off the Divine Music division's four-female ensemble.

1. ('Ode of the Goddess of the Luo River' and its art counterpart 'Goddess of the Luo River' — Gu Kai Zhi (Minford 314) — translated by Burton Watson; "All eight of these elements (birds, dragon, chrysanthemum, pine, moon, snow, sun, lotus) that describe the goddess' beauty are visually present in the first scene of the scroll; Gu Kaizhi literally illustrates the similes found in the poem that define the goddess (Chen 10). It is also in this scene where the viewer is confronted with symbols that represent the contrast between the world of humans and the world of the spirits. The goddess, surrounded by these eight elements of nature and the supernatural, faces the prince who is surrounded by elements of the world of man, his attendants, their royal garments and belongings. This encounter between the natural world and the world of man foreshadows the difficult truth that is to come, the man and deity cannot break the barrier that separates them (Chen 12).")

Chapter 14 – The Promised Battle (II)

Hai Yang was in a slightly better situation from the abrupt attacks. After the surprising interruptions, her expression stayed ice-cold as she continued to play the melody of << White Snow>> with difficulty. Her guzheng notes were slow yet not chaotic.

On the other hand, Xue Ling, Lan Xi, and Kong Que were struggling. Their spiritual power was far less stable than Hai Yang’s. At this moment, being under the influence of the wind’s whistling prevented them from performing the song successfully. On the contrary, because of the three’s wrong notes, Hai Yang’s playing was affected to a certain degree. The match just began, and the Divine Music division was already at an absolute disadvantage.

Luo Lan shot a provoking look at Ye Yin Zhu. Even though Hai Yang could finish the song, it was influenced by the whistling of the wind. Its effect on these yellow rank mages already diminished to the point of being pitiful.. Basically, the weakened song wasn’t enough to adversely affect their spell incantations. Luo Lan and the second-year student began a deep and verbose chant.

Ye Yin Zhu sat there without moving. He did not take notice of the wind blade collision that happened outside the Divine Celestial Protection. His gaze had rested upon Luo Lan’s body all along. He seemed to be waiting for something.

As the chanting of the deep and low spell accelerated, Luo Lan and the other mage gave off an intense yellow radiance, especially that second-year student, whose dark yellow radiance became increasingly rich. A faint magic Six-Pointed Star design already began to float in front of their bodies.

A faint smile appeared on Ye Yin Zhu’s face. It seemed as if he had nothing to do with everything that occurred around him. At this very moment, his eyes only rested on the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance. Lifting his right hand, he gently waved his four fingers and instantly began to stroke them across the strings as he used the Falcon Quickly Strikes gesture. A deep hum suddenly cried out, echoing like the morning bell or evening drum that could shake someone from the bottom of their heart.

It was a sonic boom, one where Ye Yin Zhu combined his dou qi with spiritual power to send out a distinguishing sonic boom. Dark red magic fluctuated and spread in a flash. In merely a split second, the constantly colliding wind blades came to an instant halt. The bodies of all five competitors of the wind division, including Luo Lan, shook greatly.

In addition, this sonic boom was different from the one used against the Dark Magic division. This time, Ye Yin Zhu used a continuous barrage of sonic booms. His simple strokes shouldn't be underestimated. Since the beginning, he was brewing his spiritual energy until it had completely reached its peak. This perfect mixture of dou qi and spiritual power produced the highest quality sonic booms – the Seven Note Linked Explosion. The offensive might of his spiritual power was not in any way inferior to any Yellow Rank spiritual division magic.

When was the sonic boom most powerful? Qin Shang once carefully explained this topic to Ye Yin Zhu. Regardless of any division's magic, as long as more than half of the incantation was chanted, the spell would not be able to stop. Similar to the zither song, the momentum of the zither's magic power would continue to build up as long as at least half the song was played, the song must be finished. Otherwise, there was a chance the spiritual power would backlash.

Quite evidently, using sonic boom on an opponent who was already halfway through spell casting would be most effective. Forcibly interrupting a spell midcast would inflict a very large backlash on the mage. As an opponent, Ye Yin Zhu couldn't stop the spell, so he used sonic boom to help him interrupt it. This way, there was barely any elemental backlash, while also making it very easy to cause the opponent to suffer injuries. This allowed him to take an invincible position.

Of course, the sonic boom was a bit stronger than a common division's advanced instantaneous magic. Thus, so long as the opponent's spiritual power was firm enough, ruining the opponent's spell using sonic boom wouldn't be that easy.

Ye Yin Zhu was still highly confident in himself, especially when he used dou qi to improve his sonic boom. But his opponents had an Advanced Level Yellow Rank mage after all. Therefore, he used Seven Note Linked Explosion for the first time. The seven notes integrated with sonic booms succeeded in creating

formidable power that was definitely not as simple as just seven notes played together. The overlay effect destroyed Luo Lan and that Advanced Level Yellow Rank student's chant in a split second.

The casting was forcibly interrupted. Immediately, Luo Lan and the two others' complexions changed greatly. A sphere of faint green light emerged and shone brightly from Luo Lan's chest. The rays of light flashed and died. The violently strong magic undulated, causing Luo Lan's body to shudder once more and giving the feeling as if relieved from a burden. Clearly, she also possessed a similar spiritual protection magical equipment and as such, at this critical moment, it helped her dissolve the elemental backlash. The second-year student, however, was not as fortunate. The intense wind division magic backlash immediately caused the yellow radiance surrounding his body to begin to violently fluctuate, as if it were attacking itself. After vomiting blood, the body fell to the ground with a miserable shriek.

The three other wind division mages now felt an unceasing buzzing in their ears. Their brains were in a state of blankness. For a moment, they lost the ability to fight.

Using the Seven Note Linked Explosion for the first time caused an unexpected effect. At this very moment, even though Luo Lan still maintained a clear head, the disdain in her eyes had already completely vanished. She could now realize why the Divine Music division was capable of winning 5 matches. By no means was it caused by luck. Ye Yin Zhu's zither music was not easy to resist. The Wind division had countered the Divine Music division by studying their competition tactics. Ye Yin Zhu's Seven Note Linked Explosion completely destroyed that preparation.

Ferguson, seeing the wonder that Ye Yin Zhu produced, was somewhat at a loss on how to react. He softly spoke to himself, "Praise Blue Dias. Just now, that curiously unique magic fluctuation definitely reached Green Rank or higher, but he is merely a Red Rank. This Divine Music mage's body cultivated both magic and martial arts – don't tell me that this result is really that good?"

He did not know how that the Divine Music mage's dual magic and martial arts cultivation was the most difficult to cultivate, else Qin Shang himself would have already practiced it. Even Ye Yin Zhu, with his one-in-a-million natural eight

fingers, took 16 years to cultivate his Pure Zither Heart to such an extent where he could obtain this initial effect.

<< White Snow >> at last began to play smoothly. Ye Yin Zhu didn't play with them. He raised his head to look towards Luo Lan and faintly said, "Concede. You don't have a chance."

The fighting strength of the Wind division went from five to four. There was no way that Ye Yin Zhu, who possessed two major magic killing abilities – sonic blades and sonic booms – would let the whistling wind's effect appear again. On her own, the Primary Level Yellow Rank Luo Lan had already been completely suppressed. During the Divine Music mages' music, casting another spell would be even more difficult. Besides, even though she had magical equipment to help her dissolve the elemental backlash just now, her body still suffered some injuries.

"No. I won't lose, and I especially won't lose to you." Luo Lan's attractive face displayed an obstinate expression. "Appear, my partner – Fei Fei." A cyan magic Six-Pointed star appeared in front of her. Cyan light flickered within the space, seemingly causing Luo Lan's confidence to increase without limits. A huge cyan figure practically squeezed itself out of the Six-Pointed star.

Ferguson and Nina cried out in alarm at the same time, "Wind growth-type magical beast, Green Dragon."

Ferguson smiled and exclaimed, "Praise Blue Dias. Children nowadays are truly more and more powerful. Once again, a growth-type magical beast appears. Could it be that now, magical beasts have already been this common on the mainland to such an extent? It seems that Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts's Golden Generation has appeared."

Nina's complexion was not as pleasant as Ferguson's. The Green Dragon was not a tamed dragon, but rather a genuine dragon. Although the most powerful green dragon could only mature to rank 8, compared to the Netherworld Snow Spirit growth-type on the other day, it was only slightly worse. The Green Dragon, however, was still a genuine dragon in the end. A Netherworld Snow Spirit couldn't compare to its physical fighting ability. A mage who possesses a genuine dragon to ride could be called a dragon mage. This and the dragon

cavalry were entirely different. Clearly, Luo Lan was a dragon mage. Even though her Green Dragon was currently only rank 5 at most, its approximate growth cycle still hadn't awakened.

With a length of seven meters and a height of three meters, the Green Dragon's body appeared distinctly obese. Perhaps it was because it had too many good things to eat. Chubby, it appeared extremely adorable. Just as it appeared, it patted its head with its two front claws. Turning its head, it tried to find Luo Lan.

"Fei Fei, attack! Help me defeat them. If not, you will have no food to eat tonight," Luo Lan angrily ordered.

Fei Fei turned its body around only to see Ye Yin Zhu's team of five, which seemed tiny in comparison. What was previously a simple and honest gaze suddenly became fierce and malicious. Its front claws came together as if to say that it would put everything at stake for dinner.

Chapter 14 – The Promised Battle (IV)

Luo Lan and the awakened Wind division competitors left sadly. At this moment, Luo Lan didn't even dare to look at Ye Yin Zhu's clear eyes.

Standing there, Ye Yin Zhu's gaze found a stunned Xiang Luan in the middle of the cheering squad. The corner of his mouth revealed a trace of a smile. It appears that for her, I won. The Divine Music division won.

"Yin Zhu." Xue Ling scampered up to him first, with Lan Xi, Kong Que, and Hai Yang following behind her. Hai Yang's black hair was once again hanging down, concealing the withered half of her face. Her complexion was very unsightly, deathly pale without even a trace of color.

Ye Yin Zhu looked at the four ladies. "We won. I did say that I would protect you all from attacks—and I did. Wa—" Spitting out a mouthful of blood, Ye Yin Zhu's body began falling down in Hai Yang's direction.

Hai Yang, alarmed, subconsciously embraced Ye Yin Zhu's body. The faint scent of blood and masculinity assailed her senses. Her originally pale face immediately flushed red. For a moment, she was bewildered, not knowing what she should do.



Dazed, Ye Yin Zhu appeared to be seeing everything that was within his body — his meridians, his blood, his five viscera, his six bowels — he could see it all.

'Yi, why can I see all of this?' Yin Zhu's heart brimmed with suspicions. At this moment, changes occurred within his blood. The originally bright red blood unknowingly turned violet, a light shade of violet. Very quickly, before his very eyes, the violet blood rendered everything the same color.

A prickly, itching sensation spread throughout his body, permeating to the very bone. He wanted to scratch, but as it turns out he couldn't. That prickly, itching sensation became more and more intense as a wisp of heat raged unceasingly within his body. His itch ached more and more, torturing him to the point where he couldn't endure it at all. His whole body itched. This kind of intense suffering

made him desperately struggle with all of his might. Unfortunately, this pain was not something he could control.

Unaware of how much time had passed, Ye Yin Zhu felt like he was falling apart. The heat changed into a powerful current, swallowing all of the prickly, itching sensation. A surge of heat caused him to feel as if he boiling in lava. At this moment, however, the scorching heat felt several times more pleasant than the prior itch.

At last, the heat gradually stopped circulating. Ye Yin Zhu's consciousness also became fuzzy. His whole body relaxed, and he fell deep into the darkness.



His face was caressed by something cool and moist, making him feel indescribably comfortable. Moaning lowly, Ye Yin Zhu slowly opened his eyes.

“Praise Blue Dias! Yin Zhu, you're finally awake.” Sura's voice echoed with excitement. The deep concern warmed Ye Yin Zhu's heart.

His blurry vision gradually became clearer, his six senses returning one by one. Ye Yin Zhu discovered that he was actually resting on a pair of thighs. The faint, delicate maidenly fragrance, somewhat cold and refreshing, appealed to him. Comfy, extremely comfy. This was the best pillow he'd ever had in his entire life. At the same time, he also discovered that he was embracing something soft and flexible.

“Hai Yang, how are you? You, why are you here?” Coming to his senses, Ye Yin Zhu was stunned as he processed everything in front of his eyes. He realized that he was currently in an extremely questionable situation: his head resting on Hai Yang's thigh, his arms tightly wrapped around her waist, and his face snug against Hai Yang's stomach. That touching, coldly refreshing and delicate fragrance came from Hai Yang's body.

Almost immediately, he pulled his hands away. Ye Yin Zhu abruptly sat up to find that both his arms and body were somewhat stiff. Clearly he had been in that position for a long time. His heartbeat sped up in a flash, even faster than when he saw Xiang Luan.

Black hair concealed half her face, and her head was lowered. Ye Yin Zhu

couldn't completely see Hai Yang's expression, but the attractive side of her face was already very red.

Sura stood to the side with a towel in his hand. The cool and refreshing sensation earlier was clearly from this towel. He looked at Ye Yin Zhu with a fake smile on his face and said, "You're actually asking us this? As far as I know, you passed out on the training field, right onto Hai Yang of all people. Not only that, but you even took advantage of the opportunity and embraced her, refusing to let go no matter what we did. There was no other choice. Hai Yang could only come back with you. Originally we thought that everything would be fine once we put you on your bed, but who could have imagined that you would actually hold her even tighter. Only this time, you grabbed her somewhere else.... You actually used someone as your pillow. This Hai Yang is, indeed, kindhearted. If it was me, humph humph..."

"This, this..." Ye Yin Zhu already didn't know what he should say. His face was even redder than Hai Yang's. Lowering his head, he didn't dare to look at this half-beautiful, half-ugly, ice-cold girl at his side.

The blush on Hai Yang's face gradually faded away, recovering its ice-cold appearance. That pale, charming face seemed truly distressed. "Are you alright?"

Ye Yin Zhu recalled that it was because of his battle with the Green Dragon Fei Fei that he sustained such severe damage. The Green Dragon's Wind Blade Breath was not easy to block; Ye Yin Zhu relied on his dou qi and his special weapon to repel the wind blades, but he also suffered a tremendous impact. Afterwards, he, again, was slammed against the top of the boundary in his struggle with Fei Fei. He was afflicted with serious damage twice, causing him to later spew blood and lose consciousness.

As he moved his body, he was amazed to discover that there wasn't even the slightest twinge of pain within his body. Even his magic and dou qi seemed to have recovered by as much as 70-80%. Furthermore, his whole body now seemed to be brimming with power—as if it could barely contain itself. His body was feeling sticky, which was somewhat unbearable, as it seemed that he had produced a lot of sweat.

“I’m alright. How did I recover so quickly? After I lost consciousness, did you help me recover?”

Sura said, “No. After we carried you back, your whole body began to go cold then hot, trembling continuously. I tried to inject dou qi into your body to help heal you, but it was bounced back by a reverse force. Later, you kept sweating constantly, your body seemed to be emitting a trembling, violet smoke. You tossed and turned for an hour before calming down, embracing Hai Yang as you fell asleep. It’s now evening. At that time, we saw that you were heavily injured. Are you truly alright now?”

Not waiting for Ye Yin Zhu to speak, Hai Yang already stood up to leave. A wide expanse of her long, pure white skirt was soaked with sweat, which was clearly left behind by Ye Yin Zhu. “Since you are alright, I’ll leave. If you haven’t recovered, don’t compete in the match tomorrow.” Once she finished speaking, she turned and walked away. In that split second, Ye Yin Zhu clearly saw the ugly half of her face hidden under her black hair.

“Hai Yang,” Ye Yin Zhu called out.

Hai Yang’s steps stopped.

“Thank you.”

Lightly shaking her head, she didn’t say anything. She drifted away. Looking at Hai Yang’s retreating figure, Ye Yin Zhu mind already had a plan. He concluded that the biggest cause of Hai Yang’s icy aura was her face. That clearly was the result of something unnatural.

“Stop looking, all the others have already left. Yin Zhu, quickly tell me what kind of weapon you used today at the end of your match! I had never seen anything like it before.” Sura’s curious face stared at him.

“Oh, that one! That was...” Ye Yin Zhu lifted his right hand...

Chapter 15 – Advancing to the Finals (I)

“Stop looking, all the others have already left. Yin Zhu, quickly tell me what kind of weapon you used today at the end of your match! I had never seen anything like it before.” Sura’s curious face stared at him.

“Oh, that one! That was...” Ye Yin Zhu lifted his right hand and pulled at his sleeve. He revealed an aquamarine bracelet that sparkled with a soft light. The Life Guardian Bracelet fit snugly against his skin. This aquamarine bracelet was worn on his wrist.

“Wow, such a gorgeous bracelet! How much money is it worth?” Sura’s eyes lit up like gold coins.

Ye Yin Zhu laughed bitterly and replied, “You only care about money.”

Sura snorted and retorted, “Money isn’t everything, but you absolutely cannot be moneyless. How would we eat without money? Also, you’re a boy, yet you are wearing a bracelet.” Suddenly, he seemed to think of something. Sura opened his eyes wide and continued, “You’re not telling me that this bracelet was that weapon you used today, right?”

Ye Yin Zhu laughed lightly and said, “It’s called Jade Silk. Watch.” As he said this, he gently shook his wrist. Immediately, the aquamarine bracelet glinted with rays of light as it expanded in a flash, changing into a ten meter long emerald thread in the blink of an eye. Under the control of faint yellow dou qi, it constantly morphed into different shapes and forms in the air. It strangely felt as if it was alive.

Sura, startled, raised his hand to grab the Jade Silk in the air. She discovered that the Jade Silk was only a bit thicker than hair. It naturally gave him a gentle, warm feeling in the middle of his hand. When he pulled on it lightly, the Jade Silk didn’t react as it was extremely durable.

Ye Yin Zhu’s four fingers easily slid through the rippling loop. It once again twined around his wrist, changing back into a bracelet. “I lived in a region called

the Desolate Jade Sea, a small area in the Kingdom of Arcadia. The Desolate Jade Sea is an enormous bamboo forest. In the center of this bamboo forest is a Bamboo Tree of Life, the nexus of the Desolate Jade Sea. The Bamboo of Life had a core at its center. Every century, it grows a little over two and a half centimeters. This was the material for Jade Silk. It can be said to be the toughest and most durable thing in the whole world. Moreover, it possesses tremendous vitality.”

Sura asked, dumbstruck, “Two and a half centimeters every century? Your Jade Silk is 10 meters long; isn’t that 30,000 years?” ¹

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and replied, “Yes! As a result, its vitality is incomparably tremendous. You shouldn’t only see it as nothing more than a thin thread of silk. It can be both flexible and stiff, has innumerable uses, and can even turn rock into powder by striking it. Its sharpness isn’t inferior to any weapon.”

He didn’t say that this Jade Silk was precisely the Bamboo Sect’s most valuable treasure. Ye Yin Zhu was born with only eight fingers. Because both hands didn’t have a pinky finger, he was not at all suited to wield a sword. His grandfather, Ye Li, went through ten years of research. Using the Bamboo Sect Martial Arts as the foundation and Jade Silk as the weapon, he realized that this set would suit Yin Zhu’s special martial arts skills.

That very same year, Qin Shang and Ye Li agreed that when Yin Zhu turned 15, Ye Li could no longer teach Ye Yin Zhu any martial arts. And so, Ye Yin Zhu left Desolate Jade Sea at the age of 16. From the age of 15, the Jade Silk was in his possession. In addition to cultivating his Pure Zither Heart, he painstakingly cultivated his Jade Silk for a year as it was his martial arts technique. A focused Ye Yin Zhu had a comprehension ability several times higher than ordinary people due to his Yellow Bamboo Level 1 dou qi foundation and him being a disciple of the founder of the Bamboo Sect. Although his Jade Silk cultivation still wasn’t at the stage where he could completely control it, at least the Bamboo Sect martial arts technique Ye Li taught him could already be put to use.

When he confronted the Green Dragon earlier today, Fei Fei’s speed had exceeded Yin Zhu’s expectations. Thus, he didn’t have enough time to use sound blades to fend it off. Lacking a better option, he used this martial arts technique

for the first time. If it weren't for the Jade Silk's toughness, durability, and sharpness, how could he have possibly damaged the Green Dragon's genuine gigantic dragon scales defense?

"So you really are a dual magic-martial arts cultivator! And at Yellow Rank dou qi as well! It's significantly stronger than your magic." Sura looked at the Jade Silk on Ye Yin Zhu's wrist, his eyes flashing with hint of peculiarity.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled but remained silent about his secret capabilities. Even though he already trusted Sura a lot, he still couldn't speak of it lightly.

At this very moment, a knock suddenly sounded from the door.

"Who would come this late? Could it be that Hai Yang has returned?" Sura asked puzzledly as he got up and left the room to open the door.

Dressed in a white magic robe, Nina walked into the dorm room. As soon as she entered through the door, she asked, "How is Ye Yin Zhu?"

"Oh, it's Dean Nina. Hello. Ye Yin Zhu has already awoken." Sura hurriedly let Nina into the dorm.

"Grandma Nina, why did you come?" Ye Yin Zhu stood up. The room was really a bit small. He was obliged to yield his bed in order for Nina to take a seat.

Nina took several glances at Ye Yin Zhu from top to bottom. His restored, clear, bright gaze indicated that his body's status was pretty good. "Are you alright? You recovered so quickly. I really don't know what your body is made of." Seeing that Ye Yin Zhu was alright, she let out a sigh of relief.

Ye Yin Zhu scratched his head and answered, "I also don't know how I recovered so quickly. Maybe my body is relatively strong." Even as he spoke those words, he couldn't refrain from recalling that dream where his body was plagued by a strange, difficult to endure itch. He faintly felt that his body's recovery and that dream seemed to somehow be related.

"If you're alright, then I'm relieved. For one, I came here today to see how your body is. Secondly, I wanted to tell you some good news." Nina exposed a rare smile, her current mood extraordinarily good. She hadn't felt this happy in many years.

“Good news? What good news?” Ye Yin Zhu asked in surprise.

Nina smiled and said, “Our Divine Music division has already broken into the Freshman Competition finals.”

“Eh? Didn’t we only compete in six preliminary matches?” Ye Yin Zhu stated, stunned.

Nina proudly said, “Praise Blue Dias. Perhaps this is Heaven’s favor. Our Divine Music division won six matches and can already qualify to enter the finals. No matter if it is the Magic Department or the Martial Arts Department, we are first.”

To the side, Sura said, “That can’t be right. Even if the Divine Music division became this year’s dark horse, there is still the three popular divisions: the Spatial division, the Summon division, and the Spiritual division! The Divine Music division will face them in the final three matches. Those will be hard battles. Can you still determine that the Divine Music division will be victorious?”

Nina said, “Of course not. Because, even without the last three matches, we have already qualified. Although the quality of the freshmen in the Spiritual division and Spatial division are pretty good, they are too close in strength. Today in the afternoon, they’re battling each other to advance in the competition, and both sides will suffer. Altogether, there are 10 competitors, and eight of them have been seriously injured, including the two generals. Both of them have already forfeited tomorrow’s match. In other words, they can at most have a 7 victory: 2 loss record. And these two divisions just happen to be our opponents for tomorrow. Winning by default, we would have eight victories. No matter how our match against the Summon division goes, we will inevitably appear within the top two of the Magic Department. The Summon division’s luck is also excellent. They didn’t have to face our Divine Music division, Spatial division, and Spiritual division until the last two days of the competition. It is almost certain that they will go hand in hand with us in qualifying.”

Ye Yin Zhu was pleasantly surprised and said, “So it’s like this. It seems that our luck is indeed very good. Grandma Nina, don’t worry. I will certainly prepare well for the final match against the Summon division, and I will strive to defeat them.”

Nina shook her head and said, “No. I have already decided to forfeit the match against the Summon division.”

“Why?” Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes widened.

1. (More like 36,000 years, but Sura’s rather understating it. Or Sura’s bad at math, either or.)

Chapter 15 – Advancing to the Finals (II)

Nina explained, “During these past few days, any intelligent person can see that although the Divine Music division is made up of five competitors, in the end, you basically prevailed over the six magic divisions by yourself. You work too hard. Regardless of whether it was magic power or spiritual power, the consumption wasn’t small. Even though your body is currently already recovered, I want you to rest as much as possible so that you’ll be in the best condition for the finals. Furthermore, in the finals, if you encounter a situation as dangerous as the one yesterday, concede immediately. This is, after all, only a competition. I don’t want anything bad to happen.”

Although Nina’s manner of speaking was very straightforward, Ye Yin Zhu and Sura could both discern the concern in her voice.

“Grandma Nina, who will be our opponents in the finals? Ye Yin Zhu asked.

Nina answered, “At this moment, it is difficult to tell; the Martial Arts Department over there has 17 divisions. Their round-robin tournament lasts several days longer than ours. Among the top few divisions, there isn’t much of a difference in terms of strength. Right now, it is still very difficult to tell who will enter the finals. If we end up placing second in the Magic Department, we will have to face whoever is ranked first in the Martial Arts Department in the first match of the finals. The top few specializations of the Martial Arts Department have relatively equal strength. There shouldn’t be much difference between the strengths of first and second. Therefore, us giving up first place in the Magic Department doesn’t matter. The earliest the finals stage of the competition might begin is in a week. For the next few days, you don’t need to go to the Divine Music division to report in. Just rest in your dormitory.”

“Well — thank you, Grandma Nina.”

“Oh, that’s right. President Ferguson has been observing all of our Divine Music division matches. Aside from being the president of the institution, he is also the most powerful mage here—he is a Spiritual mage. He told me in private

that he intends to guide your spiritual power cultivation. Although there are some differences between our Divine Music division and the Spiritual division, through practice we still to achieve the same result. By the time this term truly begins, I want you to accept his pointers. You can benefit from his instructions. I need to go, come show me out.”

Nina stood up, and Ye Yin Zhu accompanied her out of the room and dormitory. When she glanced back and saw that Sura didn't follow them, she said to Ye Yin Zhu, “Yin Zhu, when President Ferguson comes to find you, it is fine for him to give you pointers in cultivating your magic, but you must remember that you cannot tell him the Divine Music division secrets your teacher taught you. Do you understand what I mean?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, “I understand.”

“Are you comfortable living here?” Nina looked back into Ye Yin Zhu's dormitory and couldn't help but wrinkle her brows.

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and replied, “Very good.”

“Good? Nonsense. Later I'll help you exchange residences. How can a Divine Music division student live in this kind of place?”

“But... but I don't have any money,” Ye Yin Zhu said softly.

Nina commented indifferently, “I have the authority to reduce part of a student's dorm fee. You don't need to worry.”

“Grandma Nina, I...”

“You what? Return quickly.” Nina had a kind look in her eyes and nodded towards Ye Yin Zhu before turning around and leaving. Ye Yin Zhu followed with his eyes as her figure, not even looking the least bit elderly, disappeared into the night.

Returning to the dorm room, Ye Yin Zhu fetched a large basin of fresh water on his way back to the bedroom. He retrieved his towel from the bedside cabinet and threw it into the basin.

Sitting on the bed to the side, Sura asked in surprise, “Yin Zhu, what are you trying to do?”

“Bathing! My body is all sticky that it’s so damned uncomfortable.” As he said this, Ye Yin Zhu quickly took off his Divine Celestial Protection robe leaving only a pair of shorts. Even though the Divine Celestial Protection didn’t stain, he was still very sweaty and felt really uncomfortable.

“Ah— —!” Suddenly shrieking an octave higher, Sura stared at Ye Yin Zhu’s naked upper body, his lips moving as he seemed to receive a very big fright. He saw that Ye Yin Zhu’s ordinarily slender build was very muscled and well proportioned, an excellent build. Although his muscles weren’t extremely thick and bulging, it was very well proportioned. His bronze colored skin appeared to have a layer of faint violet light circulating around it.

Ye Yin Zhu was startled by Sura’s shriek. Jolting, he nearly flipped the basin over. “Sura, what’s up with you?”

“Nothing, just — why are you bathing in the room?” Sura watched as Ye Yin Zhu shed his last article of clothing, his shorts. In a flurry, he turned his body around and covered his head with his quilt.

Ye Yin Zhu laughingly teased, “It’s cold outside! Right now, the weather is cold. Besides, going outside where the female students can see is no good; I’m not an exhibitionist.”

“You, you are an exhibitionist!” Sura’s voice sounded like it was shuddering. Beneath the quilt, his heartbeat was rapidly accelerating. As a calm, very fierce student of the Assassin division, he couldn’t remember how long it had been since he felt so bewildered. Hearing the sound of gurgling water echo, Sura wished he could immediately leap out of the dormitory and escape outside. Right now, every minute felt as long as an hour to him.

“Feels so good~~~~.” Moaning contently, Ye Yin Zhu reclined on his small bed, comfortably stretching out his body. Thoroughly washing the filth off of his body was an absolutely satisfying pleasure. “Sura, are you not going to bathe? It seems like I still haven’t seen you bathe.”

“I’ve already washed myself. I’m just not an exhibitionist like you who bathes in front of other people,” Sura unhappily replied.

“Both of us are men. What’s there to be afraid of? I can’t think of a reason why not. Our Divine Music division has unexpectedly qualified like this.”

Sura turned his body and popped his head out from beneath his quilt. He looked at Ye Yin Zhu and said, “Right! Since you can rest for this next week, it would be better for us to go look for a temporary job. Yesterday I looked within Milan City and found a place recruiting workers.”

“Eh? Good!” Without even asking what kind of job it was, Ye Yin Zhu immediately agreed to join him.



The next day, early in the morning.

Just when the sky started to brighten, Ye Yin Zhu was pulled out of bed by Sura.

“Let me sleep some more,” Ye Yin Zhu closed his hazy eyes and hugged the quilt. Although his body miraculously recovered, yesterday’s fight still used up a lot of his spiritual power.

“Hurry and get up; I already prepared breakfast. Didn’t you promise to go to work with me today?” Sura was inflexible, dragging Ye Yin Zhu from bed and forcing him to sit up. He pressed a cold towel to Ye Yin Zhu’s face.

The icy, moist towel immediately cleared away his drowsiness, and he grudgingly sat up. His nose twitched. Breakfast was simple steamed rolls, salted vegetables, and congee. Sura’s excellent culinary skills, however, created waves of aroma that unceasingly aroused his appetite. He felt that his stomach was absolutely empty and made a beeline for the dining table to start eating.

“Hey, you still haven’t washed your face or rinsed your mouth. Go clean yourself up before eating.” Sura pulled Ye Yin Zhu back.

“Boss Su, do you have an obsession with cleanliness? I’m very hungry, so can’t I eat first?”

“No,” Sura replied bluntly. His luminous eyes glared at Ye Yin Zhu, his finger pointing towards the clean freshwater basin to the side.

“Fine, fine. I’ll listen to you.” Although Sura resembled a very severe housekeeper, this warmth of a home was something that, even in Desolate Jade Sea, Ye Yin Zhu very seldom experienced. Although somewhat helpless, he very

much enjoyed this feeling subconsciously. After all, Qin Shang originally only cared for his cultivation. He was free to do whatever he wanted for everything else.

After the two of them ate breakfast, they left the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. The majority of the institution was still asleep or in meditation. Milan was situated in the northern part of the continent. As early autumn approached, the weather was already somewhat chilly. Even at the institution, the lush plants inside already began to look fairly desolate.

Chapter 15 – Advancing to the Finals (III)

“Yin Zhu, let’s have a competition,” Sura exclaimed, full of zest.

“Competition? What competition?” Ye Yin Zhu looked curiously at him.

Sura elaborated, “Let’s compete to see who can get to Milan city first. It’s approximately one kilometer from here to Milan city. Let’s see who get to the city gate first, how about it? At first, I feared that your body wouldn’t be able to handle traveling such an extreme distance to the city walls every day for work. You practice martial arts, however, so I’m not worried – you’re body is well tempered.” As he spoke, Sura eagerly bounced lightly in place.

Ye Yin Zhu quickly shot a glance at the distant walls of Milan city. Laughing, he replied, “Sure.”

“Start!” Sura smiled craftily. Not waiting for Ye Yin Zhu to properly react, his body leapt forward. Not even adopting a starting position, his body moved gracefully like a phantom. In the blink of an eye, he was already 10 meters ahead.

As the Bamboo Dou Qi in his body began circulating little by little, Ye Yin Zhu urgently chased after Sura with an air of haste. Yellow Bamboo Level Two was equivalent to Intermediate Level Green Rank dou qi in profoundness and purity, allowing him to be capable of sprinting from beginning to end while maintaining his speed. Amazingly, he quickly discovered that, despite his best efforts, he couldn’t help but see Sura’s figure gradually pull further ahead. Sura’s speed was really like an illusion. In merely a few breaths of time, he was so far ahead that he appeared as only a distant shadow.

Fast! What was the real rank of Sura’s strength? Ye Yin Zhu’s heart was currently brimming with suspicion.

For warriors, a distance of a kilometer could actually be described as very short. This was why the city wall of Milan city could be seen from the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. By the time Ye Yin Zhu reached Milan city’s gate, Sura was already there waiting for him with a smile. His face wasn’t flushed nor was he gasping for air. It appeared as if he had nothing to do.

“Sura, you’re really fast,” Ye Yin Zhu said sincerely. Although Sura cheated in the beginning, he knew it was definitely impossible for him to keep up with Sura, even if they started at the same time.

Sura smiled and said, “It’s not that I’m fast; you’re just extremely slow. Come on, let’s enter the city.”

The distant sun had just risen above the horizon when they arrived at Milan City, which seemed as if it was just rousing from its slumber. Unlike the bustling city that Ye Yin Zhu had arrived at previously, there were very little people out on the streets at this time.

Sura seemed to be unusually familiar with this city as he walked around and pointed at the nearby buildings. He elaborated to Ye Yin Zhu, “Look, over there is the magic equipment store. That place isn’t somewhere just anyone can go. Although their products aren’t that great, their prices are ridiculously high. Only the nobles can go there and buy stuff. Over there is the Warrior Guild. As long as you registered as a Milan Empire warrior, you can go and measure which color your dou qi has reached. People can then receive a corresponding rank emblem from the guild. ... Over there is the family restaurant that Milan City is relatively well-known for. Very many nobles like to eat there. Wow, look! Over there is the Dragon Cavalry station. The reason why Milan City is the best in the country has a lot to do with the three Dragon Cavalry brigades stationed here. Besides Milan, no other country can have so many Dragon Cavalry troops in their capital.”

Ye Yin Zhu looked in the direction Sura pointed at, and saw a wall of equal height to the city walls separating a courtyard from the rest of the city. He couldn’t see how big the courtyard was from the outside. In the middle of the wall was a gigantic gate, exceeding 10 meters in height. The width of the main gate was not much smaller than the city gate. The most striking feature, however, was the dragon cavalry sitting in front of the gate atop their tamed dragons.

Foreboding, thick black armor completely covered the Dragon Cavalrymen, and each of them held a five meter long dragonspear in front of them. As the rising sun shone down on the sharp tips, they released a faintly cold light. They all sat atop gray earth dragons. Near three meters in height and five meters in length, these huge creatures seemed to be emitting an intangible aura of viciousness.

The thickness of the black dragon scales could just be seen from this angle. Although there were only two Dragon Cavalrymen, they still resembled two killing machines.

“Sura, what are those dragons? How come I haven’t seen them before?” Ye Yin Zhu asked in a low voice.

Sura said, “That’s a type of earth dragon called Maginot Iron Dragon. Maginot is a term from an ancient language meaning indestructible. Although this earth dragon is only rank 4, its defense is highly famous among the earth dragon race. Due to their thick scales, normal attacks can’t inflict harm to them at all. They are also considered to be one of the Dragon Cavalry’s main pillars of strength with specializations in frontal attacks and defense. The other is an Earthbound Swift Dragon. Even though these two types of dragons have the lowest rank in the Dragon Cavalry Army, they are actually the most abundant. Of course, in comparison to that Green Dragon you prevailed over yesterday, a Maginot Iron Dragon is trash.”

“Oh? Is a Green Dragon really that strong? It seemed very common,” Ye Yin Zhu remarked noncommittally.

Sura unhappily replied, “Idiot, the Green Dragon you prevailed over yesterday was a growth-type magical beast; it still wasn’t fully matured. In regards to strength, it is not much stronger than the Maginot Iron Dragon. But once it matures in the future to rank 7 or 8, even your Divine Music Division’s Dean Nina would find it difficult to deal with, not to mention you. Remember, that’s a genuine Gigantic Dragon, not a tamed one.”

“If a genuine Gigantic Dragon is so powerful, why doesn’t the Dragon Cavalry Army still use tamed dragons?” Ye Yin Zhu displayed his innocence yet again — or his naturally idiotic purity, so to say.

Sura rolled his eyes. “What do you think a Gigantic Dragon is? It’s not easy to tame a Gigantic Dragon. The number of Gigantic Dragons have never surpassed four on this continent. Not only are the majority of Gigantic Dragons extremely prideful, they won’t acknowledge humans unless it is for a special reason. If a human possesses a mature Gigantic Dragon, they can become a Dragon Cavalry Commander or dragon mage, which is the elite of every country. Gigantic

Dragons are also a symbol of strength. In the Dragon Cavalry Army, only the Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander and Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander can possess a Gigantic Dragon. In fact, there are many strong dragons among tamed dragons, but they are extremely rare. If every tamed dragon's ability was unique, it would basically make it impossible for the configuration of the Cavalry Army to function. As a result, tamed dragons will be selected from the relatively common races, making it relatively easier to pick. For example, the Earthbound Swift Dragons and Maginot Iron Dragons are typical choices."

While the two of them were chatting, the gate of the Dragon Cavalry barracks suddenly opened, screeching against the ground. A huge body took a step forward and emerged from inside the gate, extending a meter long, lustrous golden crystal horn out. Close to four meters in height with a huge, ten meter long body, the imposing and violent aura it produced was the kind that inflicted a suffocating pressure upon people. With a beautiful, dazzling silver armor, a dragon that was larger than the average cavalrymen's dragon by two meters, and a thick, significantly heavier dragonspear, it gave the rider, without exception, an honorable rank and formidable strength.

"Ah! It's him." Ye Yin Zhu recognized the rider, as he had met him while traveling to Milan City — it was the Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander, Viscount Ao Si Ding.

Ye Yin Zhu saw Ao Si Ding, but Ao Si Ding didn't see him. The huge Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon King fully occupied over a third of the street. Taking a heavy step towards the west city gate, Ao Si Ding left with a somewhat unsightly expression. It was impossible to tell what he was thinking.

"You know him?" Sura's voice as he questioned Yin Zhu was somewhat strange.

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and clarified, "I first met him on my journey to the institution. He was awfully tyrannical and demanded that we hand over the gnus of our mercenary company for his dragon to eat." He had already mentioned to Sura about how he accompanied the Iron Brambles Mercenary Company to Milan.

Sura said with a grave look, "Yin Zhu, I'm afraid that you're in trouble. It looks

like Ao Si Ding is heading towards our institution.”

“Trouble? What trouble? What does him going to the college have to do with me?” Ye Yin Zhu asked in puzzlement.

Sura glanced at him and explained, “You still don’t know anything! I’m telling you, you’re in trouble because Ao Si Ding is that little witch Luo Lan’s eldest brother. You injured Luo Lan and her Green Dragon magical beast yesterday.”

Chapter 15 – Advancing to the Finals (IV)

Ye Yin Zhu stared blankly. “What are you saying? Austin is Rolande’s eldest brother? And you think that he wants to seek me out for revenge? The Freshman Competition is a fair competition.”

Sura shook his head and said, “I’m not sure, but it’s a possibility. Fortunately our college’s status is high. Austin probably won’t dare to act too impudent. It seems that I have to explain Rolande’s background to you. In the Milan Empire, there are three major clans, each with their own influential position. Rolande belongs to the Violet Clan, one of the major clans. The clan head, Maldini, is one of the two generalissimos of the Milan Empirical Military and is also one of the two Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commanders. Maldini also has a younger brother named Materazzi, the vice-president of the Milan Magic Guild. It’s been announced that he has recently reached the Violet Rank.”

Ye Yin Zhu wrinkled his brows. He really didn’t expect that Rolande unexpectedly had such a strong clan backing her. His facial expression, however, quickly became tranquil again.

“Do know what a Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander represents? Apart from the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda, it’s the most powerful existence on the continent. Only a Violet Rank Great War Master, with power equivalent to a rank 9 Gigantic Dragon, can be the Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander. Materazzi’s entire life is dedicated towards magical research. Furthermore, he hasn’t married, so naturally he won’t have descendants. And Maldini’s only son died while fighting the beastmen, leaving behind four children.

“The youngest is Rolande, who also has three older brothers. The oldest is Austin, and he is also the least gifted person within the past three generations of the Violet Clan. Rolande’s second eldest brother is Okafur, the youngest Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander on the continent. He possesses a mature rank 8 earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon. Her third eldest brother, Oliveira, also attends the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts as a fifth-year student. He is known within the Martial Arts Department as the first person to have a water-attribute growth-type Gigantic Dragon. At present, Oliveira has already

advanced to rank 7. Reportedly, when he graduates later, he will directly become a Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander. In addition, he has the opportunity to spar with the youngest Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander on the continent.

“As the youngest, Rolande is no doubt the most pampered. Unlike her three older brothers, however, she chose to pursue the path of magic. Since Materazzi doesn’t have a child, he adores this grandniece of his the most, to the point where at Rolande’s request, he became the chief mage of the Violet Mercenary Company that the four siblings established. You must understand that it is very degrading for a noble Violet Rank mage to join a mercenary company. On the entire continent, it is an extremely rare occurrence. Your offenses against Rolande aren’t light; in the future, you will suffer.”

After listening to Sura, Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes displayed a thoughtful light as he recalled that scene at the Mercenary Guild. Clearly, that Violet Rank Great Magister should be Rolande’s granduncle, Materazzi. Moreover, that other young warrior should be either her second or third eldest brother.

Sura saw that Ye Yin Zhu was pondering in silence, and assumed Yin Zhu was worrying about his situation. Sura forced a smile and said, “Although you haven’t even attended the college for more than a few days, you offended more than just the Violet Clan. That Dark Magic division general, the freshman Yue Ming, is a member of the Yue Hui Clan, one of the three major clans. Furthermore, her position in the Yue Hui Clan is about the same as Rolande’s in the Violet Clan. Yue Ming’s grandfather, Yue Hui, is a symbol of the clan’s rise in status. As president of the Milan Magic Guild and a Violet Rank Level 5 Dark Magic Great Magister, he is reportedly the strongest mage aside from those in the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda. He is much more frightening than Materazzi. Our college’s president Ferguson, who is a Violet Rank Level 4 Spiritual Great Magister, is equally famous. The magic chancellor of the empire, he is in charge of all the mages of the entire Milan Empire.”

Lifting his head, Ye Yin Zhu’s gaze was still clear. Smiling indifferently, he inquired, “Is that all? Let’s go.”

“Eh? You aren’t worried about your situation?” Sura reaction was nothing like Ye Yin Zhu’s as he gave a startled response.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled lightly and remarked, “Don’t you want to go to work? Unless we hurry, we’ll be late.”

“Apparently, I’m preaching to deaf ears. Are you really not even slightly worried?” Sura felt that he had been overpowered by Ye Yin Zhu. Ye Yin Zhu seemed to not have paid attention to any of his words just a moment ago. He couldn’t bear, however, not impressing upon Ye Yin Zhu what he would face in this kind of situation. If it were him, he wouldn’t be able to achieve this kind of calm composure that Ye Yin Zhu had.

Ye Yin Zhu walked beside Sura and calmly said, “What is there to be worried about? How are these adult matters that you mentioned related to me? They both are unlikely to try and find me, a small, ordinary Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts student, just because their granddaughter was defeated in a fair match.” He had grown up living with people who had Violet Ranked strength. His two grandfathers both had this kind of strength. On top of that, cultivating Bamboo Dou Qi made him naturally gentle, yet tenacious and unyielding.

The two of them walked through Milan City for an hour with Sura guiding Ye Yin Zhu to their destination. It was an elegantly designed, small three-story building. In the bustling Milan City, it wasn’t very eye-catching at all. Not only was its position not located along the main road, it was instead placed on a branch street where the surrounding environment appeared somewhat lonely.

This small, three-story building was very peculiar. Its area wasn’t extremely large, more or less on par with the Divine Music division’s school building. In addition to its octagonal eaves with dark-green glazed roof tiles, the small building was entirely painted in relaxed colors, which made people feel cozy. It was encircled by greenery filled with tall trees. Even if the weather was already somewhat cold, the trees here still grew exceptionally lush. The trees and building complimented one another, causing this small, three-story building to brim with an air of nature.

The most bizarre feature, however, was the humongous tree unexpectedly growing in the middle of the small building. It seemed that this small, three-story building had actually been established around this humongous tree, with the tree’s canopy completely covered the top of the three-story building. A layer of small, light blue blossoms emitted a faint fragrance similar to musk deer and

orchids. Simple and elegant, it was easy to become immersed in this atmosphere. Perhaps because he'd come from the Desolate Jade Sea, Ye Yin Zhu couldn't help having an amiable feeling as he looked at the small building.

"How is it? Pretty good, right? After I examined the selections carefully, I chose to come here to work. The environment is good, plus the pay isn't bad. This is a teahouse where waiters take in roughly ten silver coins every day. There is also tip. If you do well, wages can also increase. Come on, let's enter." As he spoke, Sura dragged Ye Yin Zhu by his sleeve over to the teahouse.

Finally standing in front of it, Ye Yin Zhu raised his head to examine the building. He looked at the plaque above the teahouse which had the three words, "Floating Orchid Pavilion." This name seemed to be slightly familiar! He didn't have a lot of time to think as he was already dragged into the teahouse by Sura.

"I'm sorry, sirs, but we haven't begun business yet." A server that appeared approximately 20 years old stopped the two of them. The blue clothing seemed to be work clothes. Although the server's appearance was ordinary, he had a quiet and contented temperament that caused him to seem very likable, bringing about favorable impressions from him.

"We didn't come to drink tea. Yesterday, I met you here, and it seemed like you were hiring. We came to be interviewed," Sura explained hurriedly.

The server smiled faintly and said, "I'm sorry, but you came too late. The hiring announcement was only released yesterday, but by the afternoon, there were more than 300 job applicants. We have already hired suitable candidates."

Chapter 16 – Floating Orchid Pavilion (I)

“Praise Blue Dias. You’re no longer hiring? We’re very hardworking. Look, we are even students at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. Our attributes are definitely higher than the ordinary person.” Sura, somewhat anxiously, recommended himself and Ye Yin Zhu.

The waiter somewhat helplessly shrugged his shoulders and said, “I’m really sorry, but we have already hired enough staff. You should have come here yesterday. There will be other opportunities in the future. Please go back now.”

Ye Yin Zhu raised his left hand to grab Sura’s slender shoulder as he whispered, “Forget it. Since this establishment has already hired enough people, we will go try somewhere else. Don’t make things difficult for them.”

Sura originally wanted to try and fight for the job, but upon listening to Ye Yin Zhu’s argument, he could only nod in assent.

Just as the two of them turned around, that waiter suddenly called out in excitement, “Wait!” Stepping forward, he stared at Ye Yin Zhu’s left hand that held onto Sura. He inquired respectfully, “Excuse me sir, but are you called Ye Yin Zhu?”

Ye Yin Zhu automatically replied, “Yes! How do you know my name?”

The waiter stepped aside, no longer blocking the pair’s path. He respectfully bowed to Ye Yin Zhu and said, “Pardon me for being presumptuous just now. I was unaware that you are the Mistress’ friend. Please, both of you, come in.”

Ye Yin Zhu stared blankly. “Mistress, I know your Mistress?”

The waiter responded in surprise, “Are you not called Ye Yin Zhu? The Mistress told us that if we see a youth wearing her ring, it would be you.”

Realization flashed through Ye Yin Zhu’s mind. “Floating Orchid Pavilion, Floating Orchid Pavilion, don’t tell me that this is Elder Sister Anya’s place?” He suddenly remembered why the three words, ‘Floating Orchid Pavilion,’ had sounded so familiar. When he and Anya originally separated upon arriving at Milan City, Anya had told him to come find her at Floating Orchid Pavilion if he

needed anything.

“Yes. Mistress independently established this Floating Orchid Pavilion. The two of you, please come in,” the waiter said as he encouraged Ye Yin Zhu and Sura to enter inside.

Upon entering Floating Orchid Pavilion, the first thing they saw was green. Not only was the Floating Orchid Pavilion filled with all kinds of plants without end, even all the furniture and decorations were in varying shades of green. Clearly the owner was very fond of the color green. It didn't have a luxurious feeling, but a type of indescribable elegance. The pillars that supported the building seemed to actually be green crystal that was sculpted and refined.

Penetrating through the middle of the small building was the ancient tree that Ye Yin Zhu and Sura happened to see from the outside. It would take at least 20 people wrapping their arms around the ancient tree trunk to completely encircle it. They had never seen this type of ancient tree before. Perhaps it was because the small building was constructed with the ancient tree penetrating through it, but the air here was very fresh and clean. There wasn't even a speck of dust in the area around them. Some of the black-clothed service staff were doing some basic cleaning.

Sura gently pinched Ye Yin Zhu's waist and angrily whispered, “So as it turns out, you know the owner here. Don't tell me you wanted to watch me make a fool of myself on purpose.”

Ye Yin Zhu forced a smile and replied, “Of course not. When we arrived here, the three words ‘Floating Orchid Pavilion’ was a little familiar, but you dragged me inside too quickly. I didn't have enough time to think before you dragged me inside. I didn't tell you, but on my journey to Milan, my space ring was stolen by someone, and I lost all of my money. The Iron Brambles Mercenary Company was heading to Milan in order to escort Elder Sister Anya's caravan. Elder Sister Anya is a very good person. Even if we don't find work, coming and seeing her is still nice.”

The waiter led the two of them towards the front desk at the center area. From here, one could clearly see the ancient tree trunk. The air was exceptionally fresh. “The two of you, please take a seat. I will inform the Mistress.” Once he

finished speaking, he immediately headed upstairs. The staircase was very peculiar and was built in a spiral around the ancient tree trunk in the center. It didn't touch the ancient tree trunk at all, evidently taking the ancient tree into consideration and protecting it.

It was a simple wooden table. An antique tea set was placed on its expansive tabletop. The chair was also wooden and a deep shade of green. Ye Yin Zhu looked around and discovered that although this Floating Orchid Pavilion's space wasn't small, there were only a few seats. Arranged in a circle around the central ancient tree in the hall, there were only ten tables altogether, each encircled by a bamboo curtain.

Perhaps because the establishment still hadn't opened, the bamboo curtains were currently raised up, allowing a complete view of the lounge.

Sura exclaimed in admiration, "This really is a nice place. Even though it's only a first floor lounge, it takes the client's private nature into consideration. In addition, having an ancient tree be the center is indeed highly unique. This kind of teahouse is perhaps the only one of its kind on the continent."

Ye Yin Zhu lowered his head to look at his left hand, where the ring rested on his middle finger. That sapphire drop appeared to be emitting gentle halos of light. Although not intense, that gentle feeling was still very comforting. Sura also looked at the finger on Ye Yin Zhu's hand and couldn't help his lips from twitching downwards. He muttered to himself, "A woman giving a man a ring is indeed rare."

Shortly after, the sound of soft footsteps resonated. Anya was already descending from the top of the ancient tree and down the spiral staircase. Today, she wore a long, flowing green skirt that constantly swished against the ground and covered her slender legs. Her long, oceanic blue hair still draped loosely over her shoulders and down her back like before, and the two strands of hair that covered her ears hadn't changed in the slightest. Even though her eyes were currently brimming with pleasant surprise, it wasn't able to ruin her graceful and aristocratic temperament. Of all the women Ye Yin Zhu had seen, regarding their temperaments, only Xiang Luan was comparable to Anya. Xiang Luan, however, was younger with a significantly more youthful vigor. Anya, on the other hand, was a more mature beauty.

“Yin Zhu, have you finally remembered to come see Elder Sister?” Anya smiled as she walked over to them.

Ye Yin Zhu hurriedly stood up to greet her. He was quite honest, so he awkwardly explained, “Actually, I came here with a classmate to find work. I didn’t expect to coincidentally meet with Elder Sister here.”

Anya glanced at Sura, who stood behind Ye Yin Zhu. Her beautiful eyes displayed a trace of amazement before returning to rest upon Ye Yin Zhu. She slightly rebuked, “Students at Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts always pay a lot. You! Since you are in such a difficult situation, why did you originally refuse the money I gave you?”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “I can’t take Elder Sister’s money. The college’s lessons aren’t intense at all, and the pay from working should be enough to cover my tuition and other expenses.”

Ever since Anya appeared, Sura’s expression was somewhat strange. “Yin Zhu, since this place isn’t hiring anymore, let’s go. We still need to find a job.”

Anya laughed slightly and said, “No need to worry, first drink a bit of tea and rest for a while.” As she spoke, she turned towards the blue-clothed waiter who came down with her and nodded. The waiter immediately turned around and left.

After having Ye Yin Zhu and Sura sit down again, Anya sat near Ye Yin Zhu. Towards the two of them, she asked, “What kind of work are you looking for? Since Yin Zhu wants to earn his own living, perhaps I can help you try to find suitable jobs.”

Ye Yin Zhu answered, “Any work is fine, as long as it is within our capabilities. Originally we thought to work here as waiters, only after we came here did we learn that this is Elder Sister’s establishment.”

Chapter 16 – Floating Orchid Pavilion (II)

Not waiting for Anya to reply, Sura rushed to say, “Still, we shouldn’t bother Miss Anya. We will go find jobs for ourselves.”

Anya smiled and said, “It’s not an inconvenience. Yin Zhu, I remember that you are a Divine Music mage. Last time you told me you wanted to play for me. I have a zither here. How about you first play me a song? All the waiter positions have already been filled, but I am currently lacking a performing Divine Music mage.” She paused here, sent a fake smile towards Sura, and then continued, “Of course, I do not condone nepotism. If your zither skill cannot meet my standards, I won’t hire you.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and replied, “No need to hire me; I also want to play a zither song for Elder Sister. I’ve already got a zither.”

At this moment, the tea had arrived along with a delicate, violet clay pot and cup set. The server had clearly washed and heated the pot well already. Tea streamed directly from the pot and into the cups. Immediately, the sweet fragrance of plum blossoms wafted outward, penetrating deeply into the heart. Its fragrance was very comforting. The hot tea was of a light red color, which appeared quite captivating.

Anya smiled and replied, “Drink some tea first. This is Red Globe Amaranth flower tea, a unique scented tea. It’s a signature drink of the Milan court, and its production is exceedingly sparse. This tea is capable of decreasing internal heat, decreasing inflammation, expelling poison, nourishing one’s skin, and slowing down the aging process. Plus, it is quite tasty when a little crystal sugar is added.”

Ye Yin Zhu lifted the cup and drank a mouthful of tea. Immediately, the warm flow went down his throat, allowing him to feel comfortably warm as the chill in the air seemed to dissipate significantly. Then, he exhaled a faint fragrance of plum blossoms accompanied by a distinct sweetness from the bottom of his heart. All of his pores seemed to open up. Feeling indescribably comfortable, he couldn’t help but say instinctively, “Good tea.”

Sura stared at the scented tea at first, his eyes displaying a trace of disdain. But after he drank a mouthful, the disdain in his eyes was immediately replaced with surprise as he subconsciously drank the whole small cup of Red Globe Amaranth flower tea.

Anya said while smiling lightly, “At the top of the tea industry, green tea and oolong tea have always been revered. I, however, solely love scented tea. Many people disdain drinking scented tea, even saying that scented tea is the most pedestrian type of tea. Except, I don’t see it in that way.

“First of all, I serve scented tea here that isn’t made with just flowers mixed with dry tea leaves. Instead, real flowers are dried over a stove and then added to the tea. I serve this genuine scented tea as a signature item here at Floating Orchid Pavilion. I intend for this kind of scented tea to be for nobles. Different types of scented tea have distinct effects. It’s much better than green tea and oolong tea.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled honestly and said, “I don’t know tea, but it is indeed delicious.”

Anya sighed lightly and said, “Tea is a culture which goes back to a dim and distant past, handed down from the times of the Eastern Dragon Empire. It’s a pity. To date, innumerable skills have been lost...”

“Eastern Dragon Empire?” Ye Yin Zhu looked at Anya in shock. Although this was the first time he heard of the name, he was highly familiar with the two words, ‘Eastern Dragon.’ His actual grandfather and grandfather Qin Shang had spoken about the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects many times. Although he didn’t understand the hidden meaning, it could be assumed that the Eastern Dragon Anya spoke of was connected to the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects.

Anya’s complexion changed slightly, but it quickly returned to normal. She quickly changed the subject and asked, “Yin Zhu, didn’t you want to play a song for me? How about starting right now?”

Although Ye Yin Zhu was surprised in his heart, his character was simple. Anya had changed the subject, and he didn’t have much to ask. The sapphire drop on his ring flashed with radiance as the slender Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither appeared, floating above the table. Although the table was slightly high,

Ye Yin Zhu's stature was lanky. He was able to sit straight and use the tea table as a zither table with only a bit of difficulty.

With a chestnut shell lacquer, broken streams of grains, and a lustrous, glossy finish, the Moon and Tide's Clear Brilliance radiated a proud and aloof aura. The zither flickered with a faint cyan light, its pearl inlay and thirteen zither emblems emitting a faint grace and grandeur.

"Good zither," Anya exclaimed with amazement. She hadn't expected Ye Yin Zhu to actually obtain such a good zither in such a short period of time.

With rapt attention, eyes to nose, nose to heart, heart to navel, even breathing, sitting upright before the fifth emblem of the zither, hand lightly resting and pressing the string, thus allowing his heartstrings to harmonize with the zither strings, Ye Yin Zhu at this moment already resembled a new person. The purity and clarity in his eyes had already completely changed into obsession and dedication. Even though he wore a Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts' uniform, he actually radiated a grace that greatly exceeded that of even the purest of nobility.

With both hands vibrating slightly, his sleeves slipped down to his wrist, exposing his eight fingers. His left hand lightly pressed down while his right hand assumed the 'Spring Warbler Entering the Valley gesture' and lightly plucked the strings. A deep humming sound emerging from his movements. Keeping with the current atmosphere, << Autumn Geese >> began echoing quietly.

Heart and mind in resonance with the zither, perhaps it was because he was playing for Anya that Ye Yin Zhu, for the first time since he came to Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, allowed his heart to roam free. He played with emotion instead of purpose. Deeply immersing himself in thought, he focused single-mindedly on the essence of his heart.

At this moment, his mind was already completely settled, his eyes expressing a relaxed and confident light. Perfectly composed, his essence, energy, and spirit completely harmonized as one with the zither song. The zither music seemed like the already approaching autumn, which was expressing admiration in its heart. Everything was like harmonious nature.

The zither magic didn't release any rays of red light. Although Ye Yin Zhu's

mind and spirit was completely focused, he was still only playing. All of the present staff, including the servers on the two upper levels of the Floating Orchid Pavilion, stopped all of their movements. Everyone calmly stood where they were, listening respectfully to that lingering spiral of the sounds of nature.

Perhaps Anya and Sura didn't completely understand that while they were mesmerized by the music, Ye Yin Zhu's right hand already plucked strings in succession with the 'Spring Warbler Entering the Valley' gesture, the 'Wind Startles the Dancing Crane' gesture, the 'Crane Crying from the Clouds gesture', the 'Precious Goose Holding Reeds in its Mouth gesture', the 'Lonely Duck Staring at its Flock gesture', the 'Encouragement of Shangyang gesture'¹, the 'Wyvern Seizing the Clouds gesture', and the 'Mantis Stalks the Cicada gesture'.

His left hand, as accompaniment, used the 'Autumn Western Osprey Overlooking the Wind gesture', the 'Holy Bird Holding a Book in its Mouth gesture', the 'Fragrant Woods, Delicate Oriole gesture', the 'Azure Dragon Entering the Sea gesture', the 'Perched Phoenix Combing its Plume gesture', the 'Cultured Leopard Carrying Objects gesture', the 'Roaring Ape, Ascending Tree gesture', and the 'Empty Valley, Momentum Transfer gesture'.

Both hands danced like elves, fluctuating brilliantly in an incredible natural flowing motion. Contrary to expectations, it was a very natural and flowing rhythm. If this song, << Autumn Goose >>, was viewed as merely a zither musical performance, even Qin Shang would have to concede defeat if he were present. The concentration of Yin Zhu's Pure Zither Heart was incomparable to any Divine Music mage's concentration.

As the weather cooled, autumn awoke. It flew fast and gracefully wandered about. The joy of harvest was about to enter the winter of fear. On that day, the soothing sounds surrounded it, deeply engraving itself upon everyone's heart. The ancient, beautiful spiral of sounds and the rising spiral of zither music shook the zither strings and heartstrings of all present, producing this touching song — << Autumn Goose >>.

Weng——. As the final vibrato faded away, Ye Yin Zhu's hands softly rose and then slowly lowered, resting above the zither strings and making everything tranquil. His eyes radiated with a divine light and clarity. Just a moment ago, his

heart and soul was immersed within the zither song, and he gained more understanding of the mystery of the zither. Ye Yin Zhu faintly felt that his zither magic seemed to have slightly a breakthrough in power.

The entire Floating Orchid Pavilion was silent. At that very moment, only the sound of wind rustling the tree leaves remained. Within this hall, everyone's gaze rested on Ye Yin Zhu and displayed dumbfounded looks. Even though he didn't deliberately merge his spiritual force into the zither music, this << Autumn Goose >> song's infectiousness immersed everyone in the tune.

"Seven strings as helpful friends, two ears as intimate friends, tranquil and light sounds that aren't heard in the present nor the past. A good zither, and a good song. I don't know how many years it has been since I heard such an infectious song." An aged voice emerged from the doorway, waking everyone up from the pleasant, lingering effects of the zither music.

Chapter 16 – Floating Orchid Pavilion (III)

“Good zither. That is truly a good zither,” Anya breathed out, looking at Ye Yin Zhu whose eyes had changed and filled with radiance. She absolutely hadn’t anticipated Ye Yin Zhu’s zither art to actually be excellent to such a degree. That zither song had unexpectedly made her unable to control herself, to the point where she even recalled her hometown.

Although this wasn’t the first time Sura had listened to Ye Yin Zhu play the zither, it was the most authentic performance he’d heard. Without any spiritual power-laced zither magic being used as a direct offense, Sura was able to completely immerse himself in the wonders of the zither music. The touching sounds of nature also made Sura recall many things, which made him on the verge of tears.

“A shameful performance — I didn’t have much time to practice recently at school. I’m afraid that I have gone out of practice.” Zither music could give others a sense of beauty while also giving the same to Ye Yin Zhu. After playing the song, << Autumn Goose >>, close to perfection, it gave him an unusually refreshing sensation, and his whole body was indescribably comfortable. The vital energy between his heart and lungs was unstable, which made it seem as if his whole body was about to enter a special cadence. This kind of situation was where his zither magic would involuntarily improve.

“Miss Anya, I didn’t expect you to invite such a noble musician. Not only is he so young, but it seems that if I don’t come here everyday from now on, I would really be unworthy of my own two ears! Haha haha.” An aged but vigorous voice echoed out again. This time, he was speaking to Anya.

Ye Yin Zhu turned his body around to look in the direction of that aged voice, and merely saw an old man wearing a long cyan robe walking towards them. From what the old man had cried out earlier, Ye Yin Zhu knew that this old man definitely possessed a deep comprehension of zither music. Hurriedly standing up, he respectfully greeted, “Hello, Elder.”

The old man’s stature was quite tall with a simple and sincere appearance. Although his clothes were simple, he gave people the impression of a deep green

pine, standing proudly and standing out from the ordinary. In between the opening and closing of his eyes, they occasionally flashed with a radiance, holding others spellbound. Long, silvery white hair fell down to his shoulders, lending him a casual appearance.

“In the end, humanity is virtuous while music is magnificent because of zither music and the virtue of the zither. Since Younger Brother’s zither playing is this good, your temperament is discernable. Pretty good, pretty good. Such a good youngster is already quite rare.” After he finished speaking, he clapped Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder in praise. His hand was very broad, warm, and forceful. Lightly patting it, Ye Yin Zhu felt a trace of heat travel into his body and circulate through, unexpectedly giving him a somewhat cozy feeling. Within his body, the flow of dou qi appeared to have increased slightly.

Anya observed as the old man approached closer, but she didn’t rise from her seat. Her face became shrouded in a layer of ice. She indifferently said, “Sure enough, an old horse knows the way. ¹ You came here quite early. What a pity, you ruined my mood.”

The old man faked a smile. “Good, good, it’s my mistake. But Miss Anya, in the future, will I still be able to hear such touching zither music here? To have such depth and clarity in the zither, such profoundness, freshness — by far, musicians who have mastered complete realisation of the four principles really are highly scarce. ²”

As she listened to the old man praise Ye Yin Zhu, Anya revealed a trace of a smile. She turned her head towards Yin Zhu and said, “You heard him. This is a frequent visitor of my Floating Orchid Pavilion. Although his tastes in music are very tricky, he praises you highly. I want to keep you here as a musician, and it’s not because I’m playing favorites, okay? Depending on your efforts, you will be rewarded accordingly. You also cannot decline again.”

Ye Yin Zhu turned his head to look at Sura. At this time, Sura still hadn’t completely returned from his immersion in the zither song, so he wasn’t paying attention to Yin Zhu.

“Alright. If I work here, then I can frequently see Elder Sister.” Ye Yin Zhu exuded a smile without even the slightest bit of impurity. The best practice for

him was to play; plus, he could still earn some money for his tuition and living expenses. Why wouldn't he agree?

"You, what did you call her?" The old man looked at Ye Yin Zhu, dumbstruck. With lightning speed, he turned towards Anya. "He's your younger brother?"

Anya coldly said, "My business is no concern of yours. Shooting your mouth off once again, you should really leave this place. Floating Orchid Pavilion will no longer welcome you like before."

The old man's face displayed a trace of pain. "Your character isn't the slightest bit good. What are you saying? We're old friends." From the perspective of ages, the old man could definitely be Anya's grandfather, but from his tone, he seemed to highly respect Anya.

Anya no longer paid him any attention and changed her focus to Ye Yin Zhu, saying, "Yin Zhu, how much do you want to get paid?"

Ye Yin Zhu scratched his head in puzzlement, revealing that sapphire ring on his left hand by chance. The old man, upon seeing the ring, stiffened, his expression becoming somewhat strange.

"Elder Sister Anya, it doesn't matter how high the salary is. Sura is my roommate. Can he also stay here and work with me? We don't need to be paid very much. Ten silver coins a day is enough for us to cover our expenses."

At this moment, Sura had already come to clarity. Upon hearing Ye Yin Zhu wish for a waiter's wage, he couldn't help getting angry and pinching Yin Zhu. He hurriedly interrupted, "I don't care as long as I'm not separated from Yin Zhu. Yin Zhu is a musician, however, and his wage must be a bit more. It's not like a musician of his skill is easy to find. Yin Zhu is also a genius among the Divine Music division's freshmen."

Anya didn't pay attention to Sura and only looked at Ye Yin Zhu, saying, "Silly boy. How can a musician be paid so low. At my establishment, that wage is for an ordinary waiter. Everyday, they make one gold coin total. I know you're naturally gentle and look at money very lightly. It is not good to be like this. Your wage will be 10 gold coins everyday as well. As for this little brother Sura, I can keep him here as a waiter. One more person doesn't matter."

“No, no. Elder Sister Anya, this is really too much.” ‘Ten gold coins a day, that’s ten gold coins!’ One must know that an average family’s monthly expense would only be two gold coins.

Anya smiled and said, “I think you are worth it. If you don’t believe me, ask this old horse about whether your zither music is worth this price.”

Without waiting for Ye Yin Zhu to ask, the old horse sincerely nodded and said, “Worthy, absolutely valuable. I don’t think ten gold coins a day is enough. How can money be used to measure such pleasant zither music?”

Unusually, Anya didn’t debunk him. She smiled and continued, “You see, I’m still paying you cheaply, so this much is determined. Since you just came today, you should stay and familiarize yourself with the environment. In the future, from now on, come in the afternoon for work as that time is our main operating hours. You are both students, so you don’t have to come during lessons. That way, it won’t interfere with your studies.”

An absolutely generous pay. Ye Yin Zhu was silent. There was even a daily wage of one gold coin a day for Sura — other places wouldn’t believe that an ordinary waiter would earn such a high wage.

Floating Orchid Pavilion was divided into three floors. The first floor was the lounge, which had ten tea tables. The second floor was a restaurant with six private rooms. The third floor was Anya’s private residence. Even the waiters of Floating Orchid Pavilion couldn’t easily go up there. From the outside, this small, three-story building appeared quite grand, yet it only catered to 16 guests at a time.

Lunch was very sumptuous. Ye Yin Zhu and Sura followed the waiters and ate with them. Floating Orchid Pavilion’s service staff were all male and headed by the blue-clothed waiter Ye Yin Zhu and Sura saw at the very beginning.

“Big Brother Dida, since Floating Orchid Pavilion is so big, why are there so few tea tables? Can you earn money this way?” Ye Yin Zhu inquisitively asked.

Chapter 16 – Floating Orchid Pavilion (IV)

Dida was the sole waiter wearing blue clothes. He appeared to be 27-28 years old with a common appearance. If he was in a group of people, it wouldn't be easy to find him. He didn't know that the relationship between Ye Yin Zhu and Anya was special. Nevertheless, he was as shocked as everyone else when Yin Zhu played the song.

As a waiter, he was very courteous and answered, "To provide guests with the best treatment, only a few tables are set up. Ordinarily, guests visit the first floor lounge; the six private rooms on the second floor must be reserved in advance. After the noonday meal, people gradually arrive in the afternoon. Like that old horse, he's a frequent visitor of the six private rooms on the second floor. As the Mistress made clear just now, the central room on the second floor will be prepared as a specialized performance room for you. Do you have any special requests?"

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head, smiled, and said, "No, I have already troubled Elder Sister Anya enough. As long as my playing area is slightly quiet, it's fine. I like a good environment, and this place is excellent. That central ancient tree in the middle of Floating Orchid Pavilion is the biggest I've seen on this continent. This atmosphere makes me very fond of the environment."

Dida nodded and said, "It's good that you like it."

Once they finished eating lunch, Sura was somewhat reluctant as he was assigned to work on the first floor. Ye Yin Zhu and Dida left for the second floor together. Anya hadn't reappeared.

The first and second floor of Floating Orchid Pavilion were identical. They both encircled that humongous, ancient tree. At this moment, the staircase spiraling around the ancient tree branched off to several circular platforms, each with a wooden table on it. The surrounding frames were actually vines that hung down from the ancient tree and surrounded the platforms. They appeared very sturdy.

Dida pointed at a circular platform and said while smiling, "This is your work area from now on. Once it gets colder, I'll think of a way to remedy the

temperature issue. The platform is equidistant with all of the other private rooms. This way, you have a relatively peaceful environment to perform in.”

“This is truly fantastic.” Ye Yin Zhu looked at layer of tiny, blue blossoms atop that humongous tree. He felt that the tree was surging with life along with a gentle atmosphere. He was excited, to say the least. When playing in this kind of area, his practice performances would certainly be given excellent assistance. If not because of his embarrassing lack of money, he would pay to come here and practice in such a good environment!

When it was time for Ye Yin Zhu to sit on the platform, Dida already set up the proper curtains. This made the people outside unable to see Ye Yin Zhu.

After cultivating his Pure Zither Heart for 16 years, the zither had already become a part of Ye Yin Zhu’s life. Since coming to Milan, this was the first time he practiced in a place similar to the Desolate Jade Sea. For the whole afternoon, he was unaware of everything outside, having completely immersed himself in the zither music. With the Moon and Tide’s Clear Brilliance zither, he wholeheartedly played the long and wonderful zither song that seemingly and gradually became refined.

Throughout the afternoon, for four whole hours, Ye Yin Zhu hadn’t stopped playing at all. He wasn’t even aware that Sura delivered tea to him. Four hours later, not one of the zither tunes had been repeated. Within the entire Floating Orchid Pavilion, the rising spirals of zither music fluttered in the wind from beginning to end.

The Zither Sect’s zither music had eight major consummate skills: teaching on the lookout, capturing the heart and soul, distinguishing between happiness and anger, reflecting on affection and emotion, pondering calmness of the soul, strengthening courage, eliminating impurity, and hindering magical beasts. Ye Yin Zhu had little success with these eight different types of mentalities for zither magic. He suddenly discovered, however, that even though he wasn’t blending magic into the zither song he released, it seemed that his comprehension of these eight major consummate skills had deepened even more during the course of his playing.

The zither music quietly faded away. In his heart, Ye Yin Zhu thought to

himself, 'Could it be that this is what Grandfather Qin was actually saying? I can only make a breakthrough if I venture into society, thus advancing to an even higher realm of zither magic?'

While he was pondering in his heart, applause simultaneously echoed from all three floors of the Floating Orchid Pavilion. Anya didn't know when she had reached the staircase on the third floor, but she lowered her head to look down the curtain at Ye Yin Zhu. She was the only one able to see Ye Yin Zhu's concentrated expression towards the zither. A faint smile appeared on her graceful face.

Anya's flat voice echoed, "That is all for today. Everyone, please return home." After all, this Floating Orchid Pavilion only operated business in the afternoon.

No one spoke, only footsteps of varying weights sounded. A moment later, Floating Orchid Pavilion had again become peaceful.

"Elder Sister Anya." Ye Yin Zhu stepped out from the curtains.

"Yin Zhu, your zither playing is really good. You must be tired since you haven't moved from this area since noon. Go rest at once; I'll get someone to prepare you dinner." Anya gazed at Ye Yin Zhu with deep concern, yet on Ye Yin Zhu's face, she didn't see even a hint of fatigue. His two glittering eyes instead became even clearer.

"There's no need, Elder Sister Anya. I need to return to the college. I still have things to do. Tomorrow I will come again. I can come around for the next seven days. After that is the start of the term, however, so I might not be able to in the future. Even though I have morning classes, I don't know if there will still be time to come." Anya gave him a very amiable feeling, causing his heart to feel very warm.

"That's okay. Be careful on your journey home." Anya didn't stay for much longer, merely sending Ye Yin Zhu off with a slight smile and having Dida lead him down the storied building.

"Yin Zhu, are you not tired?" Sura had changed out of the black waiter clothes and into his Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts school uniform already.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head, smiled, and said, "Every day, I would play for just as

long as I did today. How can I be tired? Instead, this gave me a really good feeling. The breath of nature is rich, allowing my heart to easily be tranquil, so I can completely immerse myself in the zither music.”

The two of them left Floating Orchid Pavilion, walking the same path they took this morning to return to Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.

“Yin Zhu, do you know who that Miss Anya is?” Sura asked suddenly.

Ye Yin Zhu blankly replied, “Isn’t Elder Sister Anya the boss of Floating Orchid Pavilion? What else?”

Sura shook his head and said, “No, it’s not that simple. Exactly as you began to play, all 16 tables of Floating Orchid Pavilion’s first and second floor were packed full with clientele, yet it was odd how no one made a racket. Everyone was even speaking softly. These people were also all attired in cyan or blue clothing, somewhat similar to the ones us waiters wore. From what I saw, however, all the guests that visit the Floating Orchid Pavilion are not ordinary people. They only spoke quietly there, drank there, or chatted to each other softly. It seemed like they all frequently visited the place.”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “That doesn’t matter! There wasn’t a lot of noise which just means that the guests are of good character.”

Sura argued, “But do you know how much the scented tea of Floating Orchid Pavilion sells for?”

Ye Yin Zhu blankly shook his head.

Sura sneered and said, “Floating Orchid Pavilion’s scented tea — one cup is worth one ruby coin. This is just the norm. For a guest inside a private room on the second floor, a cup of tea is worth three ruby coins. Each additional drink is another ruby coin. Do you see how expensive the tea is? No wonder that Miss Anya is so magnanimous to give you ten gold coins a day as pay. Compared to the revenue of Floating Orchid Pavilion, our pay is essentially one hair from nine oxen.”

“Eh? So expensive. So theoretically, that Red Globe Amaranth red tea we drank at noon, how much did it...”

Sura answered, “You also feel something is wrong, right?. I feel that this

Floating Orchid Pavilion seems to have a very mysterious appearance. We had better not return.”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “How can I do that when I promised Elder Sister Anya that I would come and play. Furthermore, Floating Orchid Pavilion suits me very well. I can earn money for tuition and practice my zither art. It isn’t definite that I could find a second place that has such a good environment. Elder Sister Anya is also very good to me. She is a good person. Trust me, Sura. She really is a good person. I can sense that she has a pure aura. Only pure-hearted people give me this kind of feeling. I can’t be mistaken.”

Sura helplessly acquiesced, “Since you have argued so much, I have nothing to say. I only urge you to be a bit more careful, that’s all. Today, however, you played your zither music too well. All of those guests listening to you were intoxicated. Many people discussed your origins in a low voice. It’s just that no one suspected that you’re merely a student of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. Finally, from what I saw, if Miss Anya hadn’t ordered them to leave, they wouldn’t have willingly left and would’ve still wanted to find out who exactly you are.”

Chapter 17 – Violet Bamboo Divine Needle (I)

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, “Actually, it’s more important to listen to yourself and your heart than it is to play. Grandfather Qin told me that the guqin has, altogether, seven rules: rule one, follow the way of good morality¹; rule two, sense the supernatural; rule three, have pleasing social etiquette; rule four, possess clear introspection of the heart; rule five, modulate the acoustics; rule six, move elegantly; rule seven, impart virtuous teachings. With the virtues of the zither embedded in the zither art early on, the heart is proper, thus the heartstrings can then, and only then, harmonize with the strings of the zither. If not, it is impossible to play a beautiful zither song.”

Sura sincerely replied, “It seems that there really is no useless vocation, only useless people! I see that you are truly the last hope of the Divine Music mages. I just heard you upstairs telling Anya that you had something to do when you returned to college. What do you have to do?”

Ye Yin Zhu muttered to himself irresolutely, “I want to go and find Hai Yang.”

Sura laughed, giggling and spluttering, before he said, “Why are you trying to find her? Wasn’t embracing her yesterday enough!”

Ye Yin Zhu’s face reddened, and he said with slight anger, “I didn’t do that on purpose yesterday. I want to try and find Hai Yang because of her face.”

Sura blanked out, staring at Ye Yin Zhu with astonishment. “Because of her face? Hai Yang is already quite pitiful. It’s better if you do not hit a person who is down. In fact, if her face hadn’t suffered such scarring, she would assuredly be a stunning, beautiful woman.”

Ye Yin Zhu unhappily exclaimed, “Am I someone who hits a person who is down? Besides, a person’s beauty or ugliness is not absolute. If a girl is very pretty, but her heart is no good, it is the same as being an ugly woman.”

Sura’s face slightly changed as he said, “Then what are you trying to find Hai Yang for?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “I want to see if I can try to help treat her. I can see that her

current psyche and outward appearance is ice-cold. A very big reason is because of her scarred face. A girl hiding her disfigurement is definitely suffering greatly. Her face should be a creation of the divine. Perhaps, there is still a chance to restore it.”

Sura stared at Ye Yin Zhu, dumbfounded. “You’re saying you can treat it? Even the most powerful Light Mage couldn’t cure Hai Yang’s face! Did you know this? Hai Yang belongs to the last of the three major clans — the Ancelotti Clan. Her grandfather is the other Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander of the Milan Empire, Imperial Marshal Seedorf. Marshal Seedorf has two sons, and Hai Yang’s father is his eldest son, married to the ninth youngest sister of the current Emperor of the Milan Empire—Berlusconi. They only have one daughter. In other words, Hai Yang is relatives with the emperor. Granted, because of her appearance, she isn’t highly valued in the clan, but the best doctor was unconditionally invited to treat her. I deem that you won’t have any chance of success. You won’t because yesterday you embraced her and want to pay her back.”

Ye Yin Zhu exclaimed lightly, “During the competition yesterday, I saw her face and wanted to attempt to heal it. My healing method is extremely different from others. If there is even the slightest chance of success, you shouldn’t give up! Otherwise, how can she live a life of pain?

Sura stared deeply at Ye Yin Zhu and said, “Yin Zhu, you are the most foolish idiot I have ever seen, but an adorable idiot nonetheless. I’ll go with you; plus, it’s not proper if there’s one man and one woman together alone.



When they returned to the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, the sky was already dark. The two of them returned to their dormitory to eat a simple dinner. Then they walked towards the Divine Music division’s student dormitory. Ye Yin Zhu and Sura didn’t know where Hai Yang lived; only the Divine Music division students, apart from Ye Yin Zhu who lived in the Mixed District, all lived together, so they were very easy to find.

“Yi, isn’t this Yin Zhu? Why have you come?” Ye Yin Zhu and Sura arrived at the Divine Music division’s student dormitory district and came across Xue Ling. Xue

Ling's current attire was a long nightgown. She was combing her long hair in front of the door to the villa dormitory. It seemed that she was preparing for bed.

"I came to look for Senior Hai Yang. Xue Ling, do you know where she lives?"

Xue Ling happily laughed and said, "You know more about Senior Hai Yang, even fainting into her arms. Don't tell me that you like her. I don't want to help you and act as a go-between!"²

Ye Yin Zhu's face was red, somewhat embarrassed, as he didn't know how to respond properly. Xue Ling looked at his embarrassed appearance and couldn't help but laugh even more. "You deserve to be called our Divine Music division's first small shotacon. Yin Zhu, you aren't still a virgin, right?"

To the side, Sura rolled his eyes and darkly thought within his heart, 'This female student of the Divine Music division is, indeed, very unrestrained.'

"This... Xue Ling, do you know where Senior Hai Yang lives? I really have business with her," Ye Yin Zhu asked, avoiding the awkward topic as he still didn't know how to respond to it. The redness on his face extended to the tips of his ears.

Xue Ling smiled and said, "Yes; I'll stop teasing you. Follow this path and go straight inside. Senior Hai Yang's dorm room is the furthest in. She doesn't get along very well with others and doesn't speak very much; I truly can't see why you like her."

"I, I don't," Ye Yin Zhu hastily defended himself. He looked at Xue Ling's fake smile and honestly had nothing else to say. He hurriedly followed the path Xue Ling pointed out and looked as though he was fleeing. Looking at his departing back, Xue Ling couldn't help but laugh heartily at the top of her lungs. She wasn't the slightest bit afraid of the fact that Sura was still besides Ye Yin Zhu.

Following the path until he caught sight of the small white villa the furthest in, the blush on Ye Yin Zhu's face had completely disappeared. Sura seemed to like looking at Ye Yin Zhu's blushing appearance very much, smiling during the entire walk without saying a word.

Ye Yin Zhu walked to the front door of the villa and knocked gently. "Senior Hai

Yang, are you there?”

After a short while, the door opened, allowing an unforgettable, remarkably beautiful face to appear in front of Ye Yin Zhu. It wasn't Hai Yang—it was actually the most beautiful woman of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, Xiang Luan.

Two pairs of eyes stared at each other blankly, then the two of them spoke in unison, “Why are you here?”

This was still the first time Ye Yin Zhu saw Xiang Luan up close. At this moment, she was wearing a long pink skirt because the weather was already somewhat cold. The long skirt was very conservative and covered every inch of her skin. Her big, lilac eyes displayed a trace of wildness as she looked at Ye Yin Zhu. Long, strawberry blonde hair hung over her left shoulder, covering her abundant left breast.

‘Don't tell me that Xue Ling tricked me? Isn't this supposed to be Hai Yang's dorm?’ Ye Yin Zhu suspiciously thought.

“Ye Yin Zhu, did you come here seeking Hai Yang?” Xiang Luan took the lead and broke the awkwardness.

“Oh, yes—yes, that's right.” Ye Yin Zhu hurriedly agreed and probingly asked, “Is this Senior Hai Yang's dorm?”

Xiang Luan smiled lightly and replied, “You came early. Hai Yang is upstairs. I'll go call her down.” As she spoke, she stepped to the side of the door and permitted Ye Yin Zhu and Sura to enter the villa. Afterwards, she headed upstairs.

The villa's interior was decorated in clear hues of cool blue, resembling the cold aura Hai Yang emitted. It was decorated very simply. By merely entering, they could feel the faintly cool air.

Sura whispered, “It is truly a waste for your Senior Hai Yang to cultivate as a Divine Music mage. I think it would be more appropriate for her to cultivate in the Dark Magic division.”

Ye Yin Zhu currently felt his heart violently pulse. He didn't know why, but everytime he saw Xiang Luan, this reaction arose. Even he didn't dare to look at

Xiang Luan's perfectly delicate face.

A few moments later, Hai Yang walked downstairs with Xiang Luan. She wore a long, elegant skirt like Xiang Luan, except hers was white. Her black hair indistinctly hung down to her shoulders. There was no difference between her current and usual appearance. The moment she saw Ye Yin Zhu, her expression became a little strange, a faint blush rising on the exposed half of her face. Clearly, she was recalling what had happened yesterday evening.

Looking at Hai Yang, Ye Yin Zhu's heart was still somewhat irregular. With what happened yesterday evening, in addition to Xue Ling's earlier teasing, he couldn't prevent a peculiar feeling rising in his heart. His face was once more red.

Chapter 17 – Violet Bamboo Divine Needle (II)

Xiang Luan giggled before saying, “What are you two up to? It looks like you’re going on a blind date. Ye Yin Zhu, why did you come here looking for Hai Yang? Yesterday, Hai Yang carried you back to your dorm and returned very late in the evening. I asked her what she did over there, but she wouldn’t tell me. Did you bully her?”

“I, I...” Ye Yin Zhu didn’t know if his actions yesterday could be considered as bullying Hai Yang. For a moment, he was genuinely unable to come up with a reply.

“Older Sister Xiang Luan, stop bullying him. He is a well-behaved man.” Hai Yang finally spoke, but her voice was still cold. The iciness, however, was now more frenetic.

Xiang Luan smiled and said, “Let him speak for himself. Ye Yin Zhu, what’s your explanation! What are you doing here?”

Ye Yin Zhu sucked in a deep breath. He suddenly realized that girls were very difficult to deal with; it was very easy for them to tease him whenever they spoke. “I came here to thank Senior Hai Yang for taking care of me yesterday.”

“Don’t mention it. You did save us earlier during the match,” Hai Yang answered indifferently. By this time, her gaze had already returned to normal.

“Furthermore, I wanted to try and see if I can heal your face,” said Ye Yin Zhu, hurriedly finishing the second half of his explanation.

“What are you saying? You can heal Hai Yang’s face?” Xiang Luan stared at Ye Yin Zhu with amazement, her beautiful eyes full of pleasant surprise.

Hai Yang’s complexion changed greatly, her gaze instantly turning cold. “How about you leave. I don’t need your treatment.” Even Sura, who stood behind Ye Yin Zhu, could feel the iciness her body discharged. He couldn’t help but secretly scold Ye Yin Zhu in his heart. ‘This fool, how can he directly talk about that girl’s sore spot. Hai Yang looks like a person with high self-esteem. Isn’t he asking for trouble like this?’

Ye Yin Zhu naturally didn't understand a female's mind and hurriedly said, "Senior Hai Yang, although I am not completely sure, I can still try. Your face must be suffering from the injury. We are fellow students, and I merely want to help you."

Hai Yang was about to refuse. Xiang Luan, seeing this, quickly rushed to say, "Hai Yang, since he dared to come find you, maybe he really does have a way? Let him try."

Hai Yang sighed lightly. She also realized that Ye Yin Zhu didn't intentionally attack the sore spot on her heart. The iciness in her eyes disappeared somewhat as she faintly said, "There's no need. From childhood to now, no matter which doctor or Light mage tried, weren't all the treatments I received ineffective? I don't want to be disappointed again. Ye Yin Zhu, thank you for your good intentions. You can leave now."

Ye Yin Zhu didn't expect Hai Yang to be such a stubborn and distant person. "Senior, I only want to help you. The scarring on your face must be caused by the corrosive nature of Dark magic. There's a high probability it was inflicted by a curse. Although Light magic can dispel Dark magic, it cannot treat the injuries Dark magic had already caused. It must be blocking the face's meridians. If we care for it tomorrow, your face might be completely restored. I want to try and unblock the meridians on your face. If it's successful, there's at least an eighty percent chance you can restore your appearance."

Hai Yang stared at Ye Yin Zhu with extreme astonishment. The idea of refusal was no longer clear on her face. By her side, Xiang Luan hastily said, "Hai Yang, let him try. He already gave the Divine Music division a miracle. Maybe he can also give you one?"

Hai Yang's expression showed her slight struggle before she slowly nodded her head and said, "Alright. What are you going to do?"

Ye Yin Zhu pointed at the sofa and said, "Senior Hai Yang, please sit down first."

Hai Yang complied to his request and sat down. Xiang Luan and Sura stood on either side of her. They also wanted to see how Ye Yin Zhu intended to treat Hai Yang. One must know, injuries caused by Dark magic's corrosive nature were the

most difficult to treat, not to mention the scarring on Hai Yang's face, which was magically cursed.

Ye Yin Zhu walked up to Hai Yang, stood in front of her, and lightly raised his hand over her face, which her long, black hair still concealed. He gathered her black hair behind her ear. The simple movement made her body tremble. Even though Ye Yin Zhu's hand didn't touch Hai Yang's skin, she could clearly feel the heat from it. Ye Yin Zhu's single-minded gaze towards her made Hai Yang feel as if she were on pins and needles. Her most painful suffering and regret was now completely exposed to this unfamiliar man in front of her. Even if she had a somewhat favorable impression of him, Hai Yang's heart still brimmed with all kinds of complicated emotions.

"I, I don't want the treatment anymore." Hai Yang desperately wanted to hide behind her long hair again, but Xiang Luan pressed her on.

"Hai Yang, behave. This might be a genuine opportunity." Xiang Luan placated her, using her other hand to cover Hai Yang's eyes and making her incapable of seeing Ye Yin Zhu. This caused the nervous Hai Yang to relax somewhat.

Ye Yin Zhu carefully examined Hai Yang's face, his single-minded, devoted gaze similar to how he looked at the guqin. Almost eighty percent of Hai Yang's face was withered flesh and skin, the flesh a fierce and vicious dark red—seemingly made to terrify people. Although the Dark magic's corrosiveness and curse had already been dispelled, this huge scar couldn't help but make a feeling of intense pity rise up in Ye Yin Zhu's heart. He could only imagine how much suffering Hai Yang had received for the scarring on her face.

Faint yellow rays of light appeared from Ye Yin Zhu's right hand as he carefully touched the scarring on Hai Yang's face with his four fingers.

Hai Yang's face was very cold while Ye Yin Zhu's hand was very warm. As he stroked Hai Yang's scarred face, her body distinctly shivered. A warm feeling circulated throughout her face like a river, and the scar on her face boiled.

"It's more severe than I imagined. Some of the meridians are already dead." Ye Yin Zhu lowered his hand, his expression becoming grave.

Xiang Luan urgently asked, "Can you still heal it?"

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, "I'll try. I need to repeatedly treat it, however, for there to be a chance of complete recovery. Senior Hai Yang, in a moment, you may feel a slight aching and numb itching sensation. Please bear with it." As he said this, he lifted one of his trouser legs.

Sura and Xiang Luan looked simultaneously. Tied around Ye Yin Zhu's right leg was something like a cloth. Ye Yin Zhu took it off and handed it over to Sura, gesturing for him to open it up in his hands. Now Sura could clearly see that it was a cloth bag, each pocket was in the shape of a strip. A faint purple light was emitted from the pockets.

Ye Yin Zhu waved his right hand over the cloth bag. Immediately, a violet needle appeared between the forefinger and middle finger of his right hand. The needle was about 11 centimeters long, and its entire body was violet. Both ends were extremely sharp, and the entire needle emitted a soft violet light.

Xiang Luan looked at Ye Yin Zhu in surprise as she asked, "What is this? What use does this needle have?"

Ye Yin Zhu answered, "This is a Violet Bamboo Needle. Only the bamboo forest in the Desolate Jade Sea, my home, has it. In the center of the Desolate Jade Sea is the Bamboo of Life. Altogether, 18 violet bamboos grow around it. It is as hard as iron and has tremendous vitality as well as nature's power of harmony. Every violet bamboo has a bamboo core. Through a special extraction process, they can be fashioned into a needle. In my cloth bag, there are 18 Violet Bamboo Needles to be used for my family's traditional art of healing, which can treat some ailments."

Originally, Ye Yin Zhu had lost his space ring, making him lose the Zither Sect's five treasured guqins simultaneously. Fortunately, he carried the Bamboo Sect's treasure on his person. The Jade Silk was fastened around his wrist, while the Violet Bamboo Needles were fastened around his calf. Even though they appeared to be very insignificant objects, both of them were unique treasures in the Bamboo Sect. Ye Li was afraid that his grandson would suffer losses in the outside world, so he gave these treasures to him. Even Ye Zhong hadn't complained. During the last year he spent in the Desolate Jade Sea, Ye Yin Zhu primarily relied on his exceptional concentration and intelligence to study both the Jade Silk and Violet Bamboo Needle.

Xiang Luan, alarmed, involuntarily cried out, “Don’t tell me that this is the Divine Acupuncture Vein Treatment. Didn’t this art of healing die out long ago?”

Chapter 17 – Violet Bamboo Divine Needle (III)

Ye Yin Zhu didn't reply and only smiled faintly. He waved his right hand, and a violet light followed his motion. Whoosh. That Violet Bamboo Needle silently pierced Hai Yang's right cheek.

The slight stab of pain was accompanied by a numbing sensation, so he hadn't given Hai Yang very much discomfort. Upon hearing Xiang Luan crying out in alarm, Hai Yang couldn't help ignite the hope in her heart because if he could really heal her scarred face, well...

"Senior Hai Yang, can you please take off your jacket?" Ye Yin Zhu waved his right hand and two more Violet Bamboo Needles were withdrawn from the cloth bag.

"What?" Hai Yang, Xiang Luan, and Sura simultaneously cried out in alarm. Their gazes towards Ye Yin Zhu immediately became strange.

Ye Yin Zhu twirled the Violet Bamboo Needles above his hand and helplessly explained, "My acupuncture skill isn't very proficient. Plus, I'm not very familiar with the female body. I can't pierce through the clothing with the needle as that can easily cause problems. The meridians in Senior Hai Yang's face first require the upper body to be unobstructed in order to deal with source: the meridians in the cheek."

Xiang Luan spoke without taking the time to think. "Why must you do this? Even if that's the case, Hai Yang's body still isn't something for you to examine. That's out of the question. This absolutely won't do." She slid her body between Ye Yin Zhu and Hai Yang as she spoke, not allowing him to approach any closer.

Sura repeatedly nodded and said, "Precisely, how can you look at another girl's body?"

Ye Yin Zhu looked at Hai Yang. At this moment, Xiang Luan had already removed the hand that had obstructed Hai Yang's eyes. Their gazes met, and Hai Yang saw the clarity in Ye Yin Zhu's eyes that was without even a trace of

depravity. There was only sincerity in that pure gaze.

Nibbling her lower lip, Hai Yang's eternally icy eyes now displayed resolve. She recalled that final scene against the Wind division students. Ye Yin Zhu, in order to protect them, faced the Green Dragon by himself without cowering at all. His sincere and pure gaze, as well as his gentle and fresh aura, made people trust in him.

"Okay, I'll take it off." Hai Yang pulled away from Xiang Luan. Taking a deep breath, she began unbuttoning the upper portion of her white dress.

"Hai Yang, why are you doing this..." Xiang Luan grabbed Hai Yang's hands as she spoke anxiously.

Hai Yang lightly sighed. "Elder Sister Xiang Luan, weren't you encouraging me just a moment ago? Perhaps this is the chance. If he can really perform that legendary art of healing, this may be my last chance. I want to give it a try. I believe in Ye Yin Zhu's character."

Xiang Luan slowly released Hai Yang's hands, her beautiful eyes exuding only lament. "Ye Yin Zhu, I'll hand her over to you."

In his heart, Ye Yin Zhu was excited. Hai Yang's trust made his whole body seem as if it were brimming with boundless strength. The Bamboo Dou Qi within his body slowly circulated, its rhythmic breathing gradually calming his excitement. While treating Hai Yang, he couldn't make any mistakes. The meridians of a person's face were extremely complex. If a problem occurred, not only would Hai Yang's face be unrestored, but she would even be unable to form any facial expressions in the future.

"Why haven't you left? Are you wanting to take advantage of this?" Xiang Luan glared at Sura, who still stood behind Ye Yin Zhu.

"Oh." Sura looked distracted. He sent a complicated look towards Ye Yin Zhu as he handed over the cloth bag to Xiang Luan. "Yin Zhu, I'll wait for you outside."

One button undone, two buttons undone, then the neck area of the dress opened wide. Hai Yang's slender, elegant neck was gradually revealed. The faint, delicate, maidenly fragrance was somewhat refreshing. Icy and sweetening, it

stimulated Ye Yin Zhu's senses.

Finally, the several buttons were completely undone. Hai Yang closed her eyes, her long eyelashes constantly and lightly trembled. Both of her hands shook slightly as they moved along her jacket, slowly slipping down. More and more snow white skin was exposed. Her body emitted that sweet fragrance, which became increasingly more distinct.

Ye Yin Zhu's expression was very serene. His breathing didn't become rushed because of Hai Yang's exposed skin at all. He basically didn't understand male and female matters. Looking at Hai Yang's fair as snow, sparkling and pure skin, his heart was only somewhat peculiar.

Hai Yang's jacket was at last shed. Because it was a dress, it hung down at her waist. The last remaining form of protection for her firm, plump chest was her bandeau. Ye Yin Zhu thought to himself, 'As it turns out, Senior Hai Yang's pectoral muscles are also quite robust!' Fortunately, he remembered Anya's earlier warnings and didn't ask any questions.

With lotus-like snow white arms and gentle, beautifully curved shoulders, she appeared somewhat fragile and delicate. Her slim waist was so slender it seemed as if it could be grasped with one hand. She had perfect curves, no matter which angle they were viewed from. The entirety of her features were a divine masterpiece.

"Do, do you want me to take this off too?" Both of Hai Yang's hands lightly pressed against her chest wrap as she inquired uneasily.

"No need, this is good." Ye Yin Zhu's reply caused her to relax greatly. Her eyes closed tightly as she breathed unevenly, her soft, ample chest continuously rising and falling.

Ye Yin Zhu advanced two steps forward, his clear gaze becoming imposing. "Senior Hai Yang, regardless of what you feel, you must not move. You must not make any movements. I'm starting."

Sura stood outside the door. At this moment, he found that his mood wasn't very good. He didn't know if it was because Ye Yin Zhu saw Hai Yang's naked upper body, or because of his discussion with Ye Yin Zhu today. He didn't know why, but his mood had become very restless. At this moment, he heard Xiang

Luan's voice echo from within the villa.

"Ye Yin Zhu, you made Hai Yang take off her clothes. If you can't do it, don't blame me if I'm rude to you."

"Hey, move a little slower, okay? She's a girl. Gentle, you must be gentle. Don't you see Hai Yang's frown?"

"Ye Yin Zhu, this thing is both long and thick. Is it really okay to just stick it in? Won't it bleed?!"



Listening to Xiang Luan's continuous chatter, Sura felt as if his whole body was trembling and burning up. Although he was fully aware of the process being conducted currently, he had previously traveled through the entire upper region of the continent. It was hard to avoid thinking of the naughty slant of those words. His face flashed red, then white. If he didn't take into consideration his current status, he really would have immediately charged into the villa.

Gently pressing against his belt, a small, square case appeared above his hands from faint rays of light. His expression appeared somewhat hard to decipher. He recalled Ye Yin Zhu's words – 'A person's beauty or ugliness is not absolute. If a girl is very pretty, but her heart is no good, it is the same as being an ugly woman...'

"Yin Zhu, perhaps my heart is no good, just like your description." With a flash of light, the small, square case disappeared once more. Feeling the chill and loneliness within the curtain of night, Sura's complexion gradually became replaced with ice.



"Senior Xiang Luan, can you please be silent?" You're making me unable to concentrate at all." Ye Yin Zhu couldn't stand Xiang Luan by his side. He had wanted to use the needles several times already, but Xiang Luan would stop him. It was as if Hai Yang was porcelain that would break at the slightest touch.

Xiang Luan's face turned red. She also thought that she was talking a bit too much. "Then you must be careful."

With Xiang Luan no longer distracting him, Ye Yin Zhu could at last concentrate his essence. Two faint violet needles revolved above his hands at the same time. Quietly, they pierced into Hai Yang's shoulders, one for each shoulder blade. Only the small tips were exposed outside, causing astonishment as Hai Yang unexpectedly didn't feel a thing. Her body stayed motionless.

Although Ye Yin Zhu only had eight fingers, each of them were exceptionally nimble. When he practiced the art of healing via the Violet Bamboo Needles, he did half the work for twice the effect due to all the years he'd spent practicing the zither, which made his fingers exceptionally flexible. At this moment, his eight fingers, very rhythmic and unceasing, withdrew more Violet Bamboo Needles which were rapidly pierced into Hai Yang's body. In addition to that previous one needle in the cheek, there were a total of three needles inserted. This Violet Bamboo Needle Technique Ye Yin Zhu utilized was known as the Three Needle Attention Concentration.

Hai Yang's originally nervous and tense expression gradually relaxed. Her body's aura gentled significantly, as she entirely descended into a hazy, blurred state of being.

Ye Yin Zhu took the cloth bag back from Xiang Luan's grip and hung it around his left wrist. Gazing forward at the motionless Hai Yang, he seemed to be pondering something. He seemed to have completely entered a bizarre trance. Standing there silently, it was like he became the center of the entire villa's hall.

Faint yellow rays of light discharged from his body, the gentle dou qi following the pattern of his breathing. The faint radiance flickered. Instantly, his right hand waved over the cloth bag and a cool, violet flame pulsed within the palm of his hand. Xiang Luan felt that this thing before her eyes was like a flower. To her surprise, the ball of cool, violet flame burst open like a firework, and the violet light quietly disappeared. Fifteen Violet Bamboo Needles pierced Hai Yang's body.

Hai Yang suppressed a groan, as if bearing an intense pain as her body began to violently shake.

Ye Yin Zhu moved at a mysterious pace, taking a step across to reach Hai Yang's side. His right hand continued moving, extracting three Violet Bamboo Needles. Faint yellow dou qi pulsed at the tails of the needles. In the blink of an eye, he once again pierced the three needles into three points on Hai Yang's body. His movements hadn't stopped at all. Once again, he took a step forward and extracted three needles, which then pierced another three points in a very natural, fluid manner. This resulted in his yellow dou qi beginning to circulate throughout Hai Yang's body at a rapid pace. The brilliant rays of dou qi glittered, completely shrouding her body and making it difficult for Xiang Luan to clearly see Hai Yang's silhouette.

A faint, sweet scent wafted throughout the villa's hall. Hai Yang's body no longer emitted a sweet fragrance. Instead, she gave off a touching, bamboo fragrance.

Xiang Luan opened her big eyes and carefully examined Hai Yang. She discovered that at this moment, the Violet Bamboo Needles stuck in Hai Yang's body were no longer rising and falling. Ye Yin Zhu used an incomparably fast, lightning speed to continuously wield and pierce those Violet Bamboo Needles. Altogether, there were eighteen needles; six located in Hai Yang's cheek while the additional twelve were stuck in the back of her head, shoulder, chest, and

back. The ends of the eighteen Violet Bamboo Needles now emitted a faint violet smoke that carried the scent of bamboo.

Ye Yin Zhu's phantom-like figure gradually slowed down. His every movement shifted from graceful to imposing as he expended a great deal of effort and skill to wield the violet needles.

The Divine Acupuncture Vein Treatment had extremely high requirements. Not only did it require an abundant dou qi, it also necessitated the patient's situation to be examined to the most minute detail. Before the acupuncture began, Ye Yin Zhu had examined Hai Yang's body and facial scarring. When he genuinely began the treatment, controlling the Bamboo Dou Qi became extremely important. There couldn't be even the slightest deviation. This, in turn, required his spiritual force to be extremely high. With both dou qi and spiritual force being consumed, it already caused perspiration to appear heavily on his chest by this time. If he hadn't cultivated his Pure Zither Heart constantly since childhood and built it up to the Empty Mind state¹, it would've been very difficult to sustain this kind of focus and rapt attention.

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu discovered that his dou qi had indeed progressed. After completing the Equal Life Contract with Zi, his Bamboo Dou Qi had at last been promoted to Yellow Bamboo Level 2, thus becoming more deep and resounding than before. Earlier today, the guest that Anya called old horse had inserted a trace of dou qi into his body. It apparently caused his dou qi to undergo some slight changes, becoming increasingly more concentrated. As a result, he still hadn't felt like he'd exhausted his power, even now.

Hai Yang naturally didn't understand how great an effort Ye Yin Zhu had invested. When he'd just begun inserting the needles into her face, she felt a numb, itching sensation. But as the eighteen Violet Bamboo Needles were completely pierced into her body, Ye Yin Zhu's Bamboo Dou Qi began pouring into her by means of those needles. A very different degree of pain began to spread through her entire upper body. A sudden stab of pain, then a scorching sensation, then an itch within her heart. She couldn't help but release a faint groan because of this. Even though she wanted to lift her hand to scratch at herself, she discovered that she couldn't raise either of her arms. Her entire upper body was unable to make any movements.

In order to be able to insert the needles in better, Ye Yin Zhu had already used the Violet Bamboo Needles to seal her meridians. Otherwise, as he inserted the needles, Hai Yang would have flailed about, creating deviations in the needle positions or dou qi circulation and immediately wasting all of his previous efforts.

The bamboo fragrance in the air gradually grew insipid. The tails of the Violet Bamboo Needles emitted a dense violet smoke that seemed to have completely entered Hai Yang's body, causing the skin of her upper body to appear covered in a layer of violet mist. Her originally fair, sparkling and translucent skin took on an even more luxurious air.

In fact, Ye Yin Zhu actually utilized the Violet Bamboo Divine Needles to their fullest. The Divine Acupuncture Vein Treatment that Xiang Luan spoke of wasn't simple at all. In the traditional uses of Divine Acupuncture Vein Treatment, multiple needles of varying thicknesses were used, and, for the most part, the needles were made of metal. Meanwhile, Ye Yin Zhu was currently using Violet Bamboo Needles. The effects of their use was more powerful than the metal needles.

Violet Bamboo; although they were not as precious a material as anything from the Bamboo of Life, the bamboo within were still of the absolute best quality. Having the title of Defender of the Bamboo, it only grew in the proximity of the Bamboo of Life. Not only was it extremely durable, but it actually contained a special life aura that could detoxify, and it matched the legendary magic potions of immortals, thus classifying it as a Heavenly Earth Treasure type.

After passing through the Bamboo Sect's special extraction technique for over several hundred years, only two complete sets of Violet Bamboo Needles were extracted. To fully use the Divine Acupuncture Vein Treatment, the Violet Bamboo Needles itself were used to drive out the poison, detoxify the channels, regrow the flesh, and open up the arteries and veins as Ye Yin Zhu's Bamboo Dou Qi further stimulated them, completely liberating the meridians. If not because of his possession of these Violet Bamboo Needles, how could he possibly possess such an assurance as to give treatment to Hai Yang?

Gradually, the bamboo fragrance faded away, replaced by a faintly fishy smell. Sweat droplets slid down Ye Yin Zhu's temples and forehead as his eyes began to reveal a tired look. A scathing heat rose up, and his whole body resembled a

steamer basket. The light yellow Bamboo Dou Qi began to weaken gradually, its color becoming increasingly lighter.

The pain on Hai Yang's face, from beginning to end, hadn't disappeared. Under the influence of various kind of unceasing pain, she began to imagine that it was all merely an illusion as she began to somewhat lose herself. Thus, the pain instead became miniscule.

The slow pace suddenly accelerated, and Ye Yin Zhu cried lowly, "Rise!" Eighteen violet tips were ejected at the same time, revolving around Ye Yin Zhu's figure. The eighteen Violet Bamboo Needles returned to the cloth bag without leaving a single one behind.

Gasping large mouthfuls of air, Ye Yin Zhu's feet staggered, nearly falling down. This treatment had unexpectedly taken two hours.

Xiang Luan advanced a few steps to support Ye Yin Zhu. "Are you okay?"

Ye Yin Zhu waved his hand from side to side as he tiredly said, "I'm alright. Luckily, it didn't fail; Senior Hai Yang has a chance of recovering."

"Eh?" Xiang Luan looked at Hai Yang in pleasant surprise, only to find that more than half of Hai Yang's upper body was naked. Black fluid slowly flowed from the eighteen holes left over from the Violet Bamboo Needles that had been pierced earlier. The fishy smell gradually strengthened. Hai Yang's complexion then became gentler, and the originally dark red scar on her face actually turned pink. Although the withered scar hadn't changed, it didn't appear as frightening as before.

"Are you alright, Hai Yang?"

Chapter 18 – Zither Calls Ming Xue (I)

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Just one treatment isn’t enough. I need to use the Violet Bamboo Needles to gradually reconnect her facial meridians, allowing the dead cells and withered meridians to once again shine with vitality. Afterwards, the remaining, hidden toxins in her meridians within her body will slowly be eliminated. From now on, I will need to give her an acupuncture session every week for approximately ten sessions. Then there should be an obvious change by then. As for the extent to which she recovers, I’m not certain. At the very least, her appearance will be 70% restored.”

Looking at Ye Yin Zhu and hearing him gasp for air in addition to his tired voice, Xiang Luan suddenly discovered that because of him, the Divine Music division had obtained immense glory. As the first male student in the Divine Music division since the beginning of history, it appeared that he was actually quite cute. His pure gaze resembled a child’s and that caused Xiang Luan’s heart to grow more favorable towards him. Ye Yin Zhu was truly genuine in nature.

“On behalf of Hai Yang, I thank you. Regardless of success, we are grateful for your assistance.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled faintly. At this moment, a wave of dizziness followed by intense exhaustion assaulted his brain. “There’s no need to thank me. I merely didn’t want to see Senior Hai Yang in continual depression. A girl who has received this kind of injury is definitely in a lot of pain. Senior Xiang Luan, rest reassured. I will, to the greatest extent of my capabilities, cure her. Well, I’ll leave now. You can help her clean herself. The liquid discharged is the poison that was originally in her body. Some of it has been eliminated, so she should feel slightly better. I’ll take my leave.”

“Rest for a moment before you leave,” Xiang Luan hastily said.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and bit the tip of his tongue, using the stab of pain to keep himself slightly awake. He opened the door and left.

Watching Ye Yin Zhu’s departing figure, Xiang Luan smiled. Naturally, the appreciation in her heart evolved. She quietly said, “Ye Yin Zhu, you have a heart

of gold.”

“Yin Zhu, what’s wrong with you?” Sura supported Ye Yin Zhu, whose steps were unstable and shaky, staring at him in shock.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, “It’s nothing. I’m just a little tired, that’s all. Let’s go back.”

Sura lightly sighed and said, “Oh, you! I really don’t know how I should greet you. Come, I’ll help you.” As he spoke, he placed Yin Zhu’s arm around his own thin and weak shoulders, helping him walk towards the Mixed District’s dormitories. His eyes clearly exuded an adoring look, but because of the dim, hazy night and Ye Yin Zhu’s drained spiritual force, it wasn’t discovered.

The cool evening breeze blew on his body was indescribably comfortable. At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu’s mood was lighter and more brisk than this evening breeze. After treating Hai Yang, he didn’t want to receive anything, like always. But now, he found that he’d been rewarded excessively. In his heart, he felt carefree from being able to help others, a feeling that couldn’t be replaced by material things. As it turned out, it felt good to help others.

A mellow smile appeared at the corner of his mouth as he felt the caress of the autumn breeze. He discovered that he was growing increasingly fond of this Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.



Divine Music Division Dormitory.

“What’s wrong with me.” Hai Yang hazily woke up. The sky outside was still pitch-black. Xiang Luan sat beside her, using a warm towel to help wipe down Hai Yang’s body.

“Are you feeling well?” Xiang Luan asked with deep concern.

Hai Yang stared blankly and tried to recall everything that happened. She asked with some pain, “He left?”

Xiang Luan nodded.

Hai Yang sighed softly, her gaze distant and cold. “I have known my whole life that I had no hope of recovery. I shouldn’t have inconvenienced him. He is such a

warmhearted, good man.”

Xiang Luan giggled, saying, “ I still believe you shouldn’t have allowed him to look at your body.”

Hai Yang’s complexion was red as she said, “Elder Sister, how can you say that? Could it be that you didn’t see the difference between him and an ordinary person? Of the male students of the other specializations, who would look at the scar on my face and not stay far away? Only him, only he never gave me any feelings of discomfort from beginning to end.”

Xiang Luan smiled and said, “It seems that this Ye Yin Zhu has indeed touched your heart.”

Hai Yang’s expression changed slightly. Shaking her head, she said, “Elder Sister, stop speaking nonsense. Yin Zhu is a good person, but it is impossible for us to be together. You are aware that it has long ago become improbable for me to desire a male-female relationship in this lifetime.”

Xiang Luan said, “Why don’t you want to? Don’t tell me that you forgot your childhood promise? At that time, you said regardless of who he was or what his age, if he could cure your scarred face then you will marry him as repayment. Now a good, handsome shotacon is placed in front of you. I somewhat envy you.”

“Elder Sister, you...” Hai Yang suddenly realized something. As she watched Xiang Luan’s dull gaze become peculiar, she asked in a trembling voice, “Are you saying that he, he actually succeeded?”

Xiang Luan grabbed a copper mirror beside her and handed it over to Hai Yang, smiling as she said, “Look for yourself.”

Trembling, she took the copper mirror. Hai Yang, with great difficulty, allowed her heart to stabilize before she dared to look into the mirror.

Her pale complexion was flushed red, her black hair disheveled due to sweat. The scarring on her face hadn’t disappeared, and the fierce, vicious appearance still existed in its original spot. Her disappointment didn’t last long, however, as a split second later, Hai Yang discovered that she looked different. The originally dark red scar had become pink, especially the area surrounding the scar, which

had initially been scarlet red. The surrounding skin had now become white and tender. It even seemed to be lightly wiggling, and a trace of itchiness unceasingly came from the scar.

“Feeling. It actually has feeling.” Hai Yang looked at herself in the mirror in surprise. She subconsciously lifted her other hand to caress her face. Since her injury as a child, half of her face had been completely numb. This was the first time she felt anything from there in 17 years. Although it was only to a small extent, she suddenly felt a seed of hope in her heart burn with a flash.

Xiang Luan said, “Don’t ask me how he achieved this. I also don’t know. His movements at that time were very quick. I only saw that his efforts left him very tired, his exhaustion making him a little unsteady. He said that your facial injury needs several treatments, approximately ten future sessions to cure it. Your appearance can then be restored by at least 70-80%. Are you saying that you won’t fulfill your promise to him?”

Hai Yang was sluggish. Tonight, it was destined to be a sleepless night for her.



Early the next morning, as the first rays of sunlight slightly shone through the window and into the dormitory, Ye Yin Zhu was already awake and quietly cultivating. The spiritual depletion and exhaustion from last night had disappeared without a trace. His whole body brimmed with a lively and powerful feeling. Clasp his fist, he couldn’t help but murmur to himself. “When did my recovery ability become so good? This isn’t the first time it has happened.”

“Yin Zhu, go wash your face, rinse your mouth, and come eat.” Sura, as always, had breakfast ready. Perhaps because they had found work, there were now a few eggs for today’s breakfast, a clearly richer meal.

“Sura, where did these eggs come from?” Ye Yin Zhu smelled the aroma of breakfast and already couldn’t bear it. Sura’s luminous eyes watched him attentively, however, so Yin Zhu still had to go and wash his face and rinse his mouth. He felt in his heart that Sura was unconditionally the best housekeeper. To say the least, Yin Zhu was helpless at taking care of himself.

“I bought the eggs, of course. Or, do you think eggs fall from the sky?” Sura unhappily snorted. His complexion appeared somewhat pale, seemingly unable

to have rested well last night.

Ye Yin Zhu exclaimed in amazement, “You bought them? Are you telling me that you woke up early to go buy eggs? You woke up so early!”

Sura very naturally responded, “Do you think I’m as lazy as you, wanting to sleep until dawn? Come, eat quickly.”

Sitting at the narrow dining table, Ye Yin Zhu suddenly remembered that a few day ago during breakfast, he’d accidentally mentioned that he liked to eat eggs the most as a child. Could it be that Sura...

Chapter 18 – Zither Calls Ming Xue (II)

Leaving Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts to head outside to do shopping was very troublesome because the college itself had a dining hall inside its campus. Even though they sold ingredients outside, the distance from the institution was at least 10 kilometers. This was when one was heading to either Milan City or to an even further village. And leaving the college from the Mixed District was not a short distance.

The eggs weren't abundant. Although there were only four, they were arranged on the plate with their shells peeled off. The glossy white eggs appeared to be brimming with a captivating feeling. He didn't know why, but Ye Yin Zhu suddenly felt as though the corners of his eye was becoming somewhat moist.

“Sura, come eat the eggs too!”

“Since I was a child, I didn't like eating eggs. Only you like it. What's so tasty about eating eggs? Anyways, I'm already full.” Sura rapidly downed his thin porridge, not even sparing those eggs a glance. He then got up to go wash his bowl.

Ye Yin Zhu only ate a single egg. The remaining three eggs he placed aside, neatly and carefully covering them with a cloth. As he turned his back to Sura, he placed the parcel into his space ring.

At this moment, an ice-cold voice suddenly echoed from the outside. “Is Ye Yin Zhu here?”

Sura was currently outside washing his bowl. “You? Why are you looking for Ye Yin Zhu?”

“I'm naturally seeking him out because of business. Ye Yin Zhu, please come out and meet with me.” The voice sounded somewhat familiar. Ye Yin Zhu subconsciously left the dormitory room and headed out.

A girl dressed in a black robe stood enchantingly outside the door of the

dormitory. The other nearby students who worked part-time had already risen and were subconsciously making detours to look at her. The person who came wasn't a stranger, but the Dark Magic division first-year student, the general of the Freshman Competition's Dark Magic division—Yue Ming.

“Yue Ming?” Ye Yin Zhu was somewhat astonished as he looked at the beautiful girl from the Dark Magic division, standing there with her poor complexion. “What business are you seeking me for?”

Yue Ming coldly snorted. “Follow me.” Finished speaking, she turned around and walked towards the woods beside the Mixed District.

“Ye Yin Zhu, don't go.” Sura lowered the bowl in his hand before stepping in front of Ye Yin Zhu, blocking him. “Yue Ming lost her match with you. She might want to exact revenge against you in private. Listen to what I'm saying and stay here.”

Yue Ming crooned in disdain, “Ye Yin Zhu, aren't you very impressive. What? You still want others to come to protect you?” She didn't deny that she'd come to find Ye Yin Zhu to exact her revenge as her eyes exuded a provocative air.

Ye Yin Zhu wrinkled his brow and lightly pulled Sura to the side, saying, “It's alright. I'll return as soon as possible.” Once he finished speaking, he took large strides towards Yue Ming. Although Yue Ming gave Ye Yin Zhu a hostile feeling, he discovered that Yue Ming's aura was very unstable. It seemed that her heart was full of anxiety and restlessness.

Sura said softly, “Be careful. If she ambushes you, shout loudly. I'll be nearby.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled slightly and looked at Sura. “Sura, I'll protect you from now on. I won't allow anyone to harm you.”

Sura stared blankly. He didn't expect that Ye Yin Zhu would say such a thing at this moment. “You'll protect me?”

Ye Yin Zhu very earnestly nodded. “This is my promise. You're the second person I promised this to.”

Listening to his declaration, Sura's complexion couldn't help but change. Second person? Then who was the first? Hai Yang? Xiang Luan? Anya? Some other beautiful woman? He naturally didn't know that the first person to receive

this promise had spent ten years together with Ye Yin Zhu as his partner.

Ye Yin Zhu followed Yue Ming and entered the woods. Nature had already entered autumn. The autumn wind caressed them as the tree leaves fell from the sky, bring a nip in the air and a touch of bleakness.

Yue Ming walked to the middle of the woods and stopped. She abruptly turned and sent Ye Yin Zhu a wrathful glare. “Ye Yin Zhu, when all is said and done, what did you do to Ming Xue?”

Ye Yin Zhu looked confused. “Are you talking about your magical beast? I didn’t do anything to her!”

Yue Ming’s eyes twinkled with glistening teardrops. “You cheater. If you didn’t do anything to her, then why has my Ming Xue been fast asleep since that match? No matter how many times I try to summon her, she hasn’t come.”

Ye Yin Zhu wrinkled his brow and said, “This, I don’t know. During the competition that day, I used my zither song in the end to withstand her attack. I suddenly became aware of her mood. She appeared very sad and seemed as if she were struggling to break away from your contract with her. Thus, all I can tell you is to treat her better from now on and take care of her. A magical beast is your partner and not a tool.”

Listening to Ye Yin Zhu, Yue Ming looked distracted. Her mood became gentler somewhat. “But, Ming Xue has never been asleep this long before. She was given to me as a birthday present by my grandfather when I was 12 years old. It’s been four years since then, and Ming Xue and I are together every day. Although she doesn’t talk, with her company, I don’t feel lonely while practicing Dark Magic. Why might she be sad? She isn’t intelligent, nor does she have emotions.”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and firmly said, “No, you’re wrong. On the continent, everything has emotions. Every living creature has their own life. Even if their intelligence is low, they all possess emotions. Not to mention your Ming Xue, just consider my zither. Every zither’s emotions have nothing in common with each other. In addition to their own emotions, only when you really immerse yourself into their emotions can you communicate with them and feel their mood.

“I heard Dean Nina say that your Ming Xue is a Netherworld growth-type

magical beast that can mature to Rank 9. In the future, she will be a Sentient Magical Beast. How can the outside world not feel emotions? You still don't understand her deep enough, that's all. That day, I played a zither song called << A Chinese Ghost Story >>. Perhaps it was because this song touched her heart? Therefore, she might be feeling sorrow in her heart."

Upon hearing Ye Yin Zhu, Yue Ming couldn't help but ponder. Suddenly, she involuntarily exclaimed, "Don't tell me that Ming Xue is sad because she is separated from her parents?"

Ye Yin Zhu asked, "Separated from her parents?"

Yue Ming's pale, charming face turned slightly red. She explained, "There are few methods to obtain a magical beast. Generally speaking, the most direct method is to defeat a magical beast and obtain its acknowledgement. Plus, growth-type magical beasts are much more challenging to obtain. If they haven't reached Rank 7 or higher, then they haven't evolved and become a Sentient Magical Beast yet. A growth-type magical beasts' parents will take care and protect them. When they finally attain Rank 7 in the future, that will be the most difficult time to catch them. Catching a Netherworld Spirit had cost my grandfather a considerably large amount of power as he had to draw away her parents. Once she was restrained, I could then agree to and sign a Master-Slave Contract with her."

"How can you do that? Is there any difference between this and kidnapping?" Ye Yin Zhu glowered at Yue Ming. "You didn't even think of it like that. What if someone stole you from your parents, how would you feel? Wouldn't your parents be grieving? It's not surprising that Ming Xue has a sorrowful heart. She is thinking of her distant parents! She wants to break free from your contract. So, you obtained a growth-type magical beast. How despicable."

"You're scolding me?" Yue Ming stupidly looked at Ye Yin Zhu. Since childhood until now, no one had ever scolded her. For a moment, she was dumbfounded.

"What's wrong with scolding you? Are you saying that you shouldn't be scolded for your despicable actions?" Honestly speaking, it was unlikely for Ye Yin Zhu to scold or yell at someone, but when he recalled Ming Xue's sad appearance, his heart brimmed with extreme anger.

“Then, then what should I do? I really like Ming Xue. I even consider her as a younger sister. I can’t lose her.” Yue Ming’s eyes were still ice-cold. Only, the antisocial nature of a Dark Magic mage was gone. All that remained was anxiety.

Chapter 18 – Zither Calls Ming Xue (III)

Ye Yin Zhu faintly said, “I also don’t know what you should do. If you really are fond of her, then you should allow her to go back. Allow her to return to a happy life with her parents thus no longer restricting her freedom. Take my words however you’d like. I’m leaving.” Once he finished speaking, he didn’t look back as he began walking over to the dormitories.

“Wait.” Yue Ming quickly stepped forward and pulled at Ye Yin Zhu’s sleeve. “You, you can’t leave without first helping me wake up Ming Xue. If, if she really wants to return to her parents’ side then I’ll allow her to go back.” After she said this, she seemed to have used up all of her body’s strength. Her eyes brimmed with reluctance, but they also held determination. This allowed Ye Yin Zhu to finally see her good and honest heart.

Looking at Yue Ming’s anxious appearance, Ye Yin Zhu’s heart softened slightly. “I really don’t know how to wake Ming Xue. From what I heard, isn’t your grandfather the president of Milan’s Magic Guild? Could it be that he also doesn’t have an answer?”

Yue Ming nodded and explained, “Grandfather said he also couldn’t fix it. He also doesn’t know why Ming Xue is immersed in such a deep sleep. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have come looking for you. Grandfather told me that since this happened during a fair match, he wouldn’t help me. Thus, I had to come look for you to solve the issue.”

Although he’d never met Yue Ming’s grandfather, Ye Yin Zhu gained some respect for him. When he thought of how Yue Ming’s grandfather actually broke up Ming Xue’s family in order to make his granddaughter happy, this speck of good sentiment was obliterated completely.

“So, you don’t have a way for Ming Xue to hear external sounds?”

“Kind of. When I summon her, it is equivalent to opening a channel of communication to this world.”

Ye Yin Zhu said, "Open the channel then, and I'll use my zither music to test if I can wake her. If it doesn't work, there is nothing else I can do. You must remember what you just said, however, and allow Ming Xue to return home."

Sitting down cross-legged, he released the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance from his space ring. He placed it horizontally atop his knees as the yearning Yue Ming nodded at his hint. Although he wasn't certain, he had a vague idea that his zither music had some special connection to Ming Xue.

Yue Ming materialized something in the air above her right hand. Brilliant rays of yellow magic was instantly discharged as a dark-blue magic Six-Pointed Star appeared out of nowhere. "Appear, my partner, Ming Xue."

Ice-cold magic fluctuated, but Ming Xue didn't appear in front of Yue Ming. At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu's eight fingers were already moving swiftly and rhythmically, deep and low humming zither notes sorrowfully emerging. The song began, and an elegant overtone made someone feel as if entering rippling jade curls of smoke and mist. The deep emotions within the gentle and distant zither music drifted towards that dark-blue magic Six-Pointed Star due to Ye Yin Zhu's meticulous control.

This song, << Mist and Clouds over Xiaoxiang >>, required the use of the eight major consummate skills of zither music. This song could be classified as a pleasant type of song. Through the resonance of spiritual power and music, it caused emotions and music to blend and it influenced the opponent, causing them to become solemn and emotional against their will. Ye Yin Zhu intentionally chose this song after integrating with Ming Xue's Netherworld Spirit magical beast characteristics.

Pleasant sounding tones of nature dispersed, slow then quick, scattering at different tempos. Through the light and quick overtones, a feeling of countless changes was produced. Even if the zither song's target to influence wasn't Yue Ming, she couldn't keep control of herself while listening to this song, << Mist and Clouds over Xiaoxiang >>. She thought to herself in her heart, 'Maybe my loss to him during the match wasn't a matter of luck. His zither song is rich with inspiration and it seems like his spiritual magic is very strong. And he's only a "Red Rank!"'

Ye Yin Zhu was already completely immersed within the zither song. The zither strings and his heartstrings trembled simultaneously. Yue Ming anxiously waited, but there was still no activity whatsoever from that dark-blue Six-Pointed Star. Opening this communication channel for a short while wasn't a problem, but it continued to consume her magic power. If her magic power was depleted before Ming Xue appeared, then what could she do...

<< Mist and Clouds over Xiaoxiang >> finished, and a quarter of Yue Ming's magic power had been depleted. She unwillingly let go of the dark-blue Six-Pointed Star. From beginning to end, Ming Xue hadn't appeared.

"It didn't work?" Yue Ming looked at Ye Yin Zhu, her eyes brimming with a disappointed light.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled slightly, shook his head, and said, "Stop worrying. Although I didn't wake up Ming Xue, I already know what's the matter. You should be happy for Ming Xue."

Yue Ming stared blankly. "Happy? What's going on with Ming Xue?"

Ye Yin Zhu elaborated. "Perhaps because she was provoked by my song << A Chinese Ghost Story >> the other day, Ming Xue had begun evolving since she's a growth-type magical beast. The sudden evolution caused her body to be incompletely formed, however, so she needs some time to rest. This will allow her to successfully complete her evolution."

Yue Ming's heart was moved. She recalled the final conclusion of the fight that day. Ming Xue's body did seem to have grown slightly. Hearing Ye Yin Zhu's explanation, she couldn't help but relax significantly. "If it's really like this, then that's very good. Except, your zither music can cause a magical beast to evolve? According to my grandfather's teachings, Ming Xue should've taken at least a year to evolve to Rank 5!"

Ye Yin Zhu faked a smile and said, "I also don't know why it's this way. Perhaps it's a coincidence. Well, I must leave."

"Ye Yin Zhu." Yue Ming called out to him, her eyes displaying some embarrassment.

"What's up?"

Yue Ming sighed. "Please don't tell anyone about the matter I requested of you today, okay? Especially those words you'd told me. I promise you, as soon as Ming Xue wakes up, I will send her off to her parents' side during this year's institution's vacation. But, nobody in my family can know of this matter. Grandfather would absolutely not approve."

Ye Yin Zhu smiled, a smile that naturally came from his heart. He nodded towards Yue Ming and said, "I won't tell anyone. If Ming Xue knows that you're agreeing to allow her to return home, she will be very happy."

Yue Ming looked like she was gathering a lot of courage. "Ye Yin Zhu, when that moment comes, can you come with me to return Ming Xue? I, I never traveled to the upper reaches of the continent, so I..." She was somewhat internally afraid, and felt embarrassed as she straightforwardly asked him.

Previously, Ye Yin Zhu had deeply hurt her feelings. Although she practiced Dark Magic, she still had the heart of a maiden. Her purity and kindheartedness allowed Ye Yin Zhu to wake her and make her understand Ming Xue's situation. Since her childhood to the present day, the majority of her time was spent practicing magic, causing her to now have a revelation. She and Ye Yin Zhu were very similar in this way. At this moment, the lesson Ye Yin Zhu taught her already made her consider him as her teacher.

"Okay. This is a good deed, so I'll definitely help you." Ye Yin Zhu promised without the slightest hesitation.

When Ye Yin Zhu returned to the dormitory, he discovered that there were three visitors. Because the work-study dormitory was rather small, all three visitors were waiting outside the door. Sura had already left.

"Ye Yin Zhu, where did you disappear to?" Nina seemed to be a bit impatient. Hai Yang and Xiang Luan stood behind her. All of their gazes were, at this moment, focused on Ye Yin Zhu.

"Grandma Nina, why did you come here? Just a moment ago, a fellow student and I were chatting for a while. Did something happen for you to come here?" Ye Yin Zhu hurriedly stepped forward, his gaze sweeping past the two girls in the back before falling upon the Dean.

Nina hummed and said, "Tidy up your things and follow me. I arranged a good

dormitory for you.”

“Eh? Grandma Nina, there’s no need. I live very well here.” Ye Yin Zhu didn’t evade the matter. Although the work-study dormitories weren’t very big, he felt very happy living together with Sura. Especially since Sura took care of him and gave him a warmth that made him very content.

Chapter 18 – Zither Calls Ming Xue (IV)

Nina unhappily ordered, “Stop this nonsense. Go pack up your things immediately. You are a student of the Divine Music division. At this institution, you must listen to everything I say.”

Looking at the imposing Nina, Ye Yin Zhu was really at a loss. Xiang Luan, at this moment, laughed into her sleeve from behind Nina. Although Hai Yang’s face was ice-cold, even her gaze had nevertheless softened.

Ye Yin Zhu asked probingly, “Grandma Nina, who will I live with over there?”

A happy look flashed through Nina’s eyes as she smiled and scolded, “You’re such a confused little boy, asking so many questions. You are the pillar of the Divine Music division. Don’t tell me that you’re thinking to room with the female children? Thinking to reach the beauties?”

“Eh..., you know I don’t think like that. I’m just saying that over there, I will be living by myself. Is it possible for Sura to follow me and move over there also? We get along very well. If I’m over there as the only male student, it will be extremely lonely.”

Nina said with slight anger, “Out of the question. That boy is a part of the Assassin division. How can he live in the dormitory of the Divine Music division? Go get your things immediately. I don’t have time for your dallying.”

Ye Yin Zhu frowned and shook his head, saying, “Forget about it. Grandma Nina, I’m not moving.”

“Eh?” Nina narrowed her eyes. Xiang Luan, highly familiar with Nina, realized that this was a sign that she was getting angry and hastily intervened. “Ye Yin Zhu, Dean Nina had prepared a personal villa for you, just like Hai Yang’s. You don’t need to immediately move all of your things there, but you should thank Dean Nina.” As she said this, she sent Ye Yin Zhu a meaningful look.

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t understand Xiang Luan’s intention and still shook his head as he said, “No. Sura is my good friend. I don’t want to separate from him.”

Against Xiang Luan and Hai Yang’s expectations, Nina suddenly softened

instead of exploding with anger as they had anticipated. Nina, somewhat helplessly, said, "As you wish. Anyway, the place is big enough. Only, I don't want to see any situations involving male students harassing female students. If that occurs, you and he will take hike." Finished speaking, she turned around and, not looking back, left.

Xiang Luan lightly covered her small mouth as she softly cried out in surprise, "By the heavens! Did Great Aunt have a change in nature? When did you become such a good speaker?"

Hai Yang looked at Ye Yin Zhu and said, "Thank you for yesterday." Her voice was somewhat shaky, but the pitiful light in her eyes caused Ye Yin Zhu's heart to ache for no reason.

"Senior, if you hadn't intervened at that time, I couldn't have even formally entered the institution! All of us are fellow students, so we should help one another." Sensing Hai Yang's somewhat peculiar gaze, Ye Yin Zhu appeared slightly shy.

To the side, Xiang Luan stepped forward, laughing happily as she displayed a heartfelt, delicate, and ruminating expression. "Oh, so Hai Yang came today for the special purpose of thanking you. When the moment comes, we must inconvenience you with the other nine additional treatment sessions. Well, we'll help you move." As she said this, her gaze swept the surroundings, her eyes exuding a bit of revulsion. "This place is too messy. In the end, our Divine Music division environment is significantly more comfortable."

At this moment, the gazes of several nearby students focused on the door to Ye Yin Zhu's dormitory. Xiang Luan's title of the Divine Music division's peerless beauty wasn't in vain. Even Ye Yin Zhu and his innocent, pure heart raced because of her, let alone an ordinary student. According to them, every one of Xiang Luan's smiles, every one of her simple movements, brimmed with an endless attractiveness that resembled a goddess's descent from the world of immortals.

Ye Yin Zhu looked around. "Sura doesn't know we're moving. Seniors, you two can go back first. When Sura returns, the two of us will move."

Xiang Luan had just opened her mouth when a serene voice echoed. "I'm

here.” Sura slowly emerged from the shadows beside the dormitory. His eyes expressed a somewhat unusual emotion. Ye Yin Zhu and the two girls hadn’t seen him. At this moment, the black dagger he grasped in his hand within his sleeve trembled slightly.

When Ye Yin Zhu had followed Yue Ming as they left together, Sura followed behind him. He had also clearly heard everything that Nina told Ye Yin Zhu earlier.

“Sura, it’s good that you’re here. Dean Nina allowed us to change dormitories and move to the Divine Music division district. After you attend class, we’ll move over there; it’s only a little further away, so there’s no problem.”

Sura nodded slightly, his eyes meeting Ye Yin Zhu’s relatively clear ones. “Let’s pack our things then.”

The dormitory Nina had arranged for Ye Yin Zhu wasn’t far from Hai Yang’s dormitory. It was also a small, white villa. There was still only one bedroom, but it was larger than all of the rooms in the work-study dorm combined. The living room, kitchen, bathroom, each room was larger by a considerable amount. What Ye Yin Zhu loved the most about the dorm was the environment. At the fringes of the Divine Music division residence district was an encirclement of tall trees. Not only was the air fresh, but it was also very peaceful. Occasionally, some music could be heard in the vicinities, resulting in an untroubled heart and pleasant spirit.

After several days, Ye Yin Zhu and Sura’s lives gradually became routine. Early in the morning, every day, the two of them would eat a cooked meal beforehand. Sura would then head over to the Assassin division’s training field at the college to train while Ye Yin Zhu stayed inside the dormitory and practiced his zither magic.

At noon, Sura would rush back to prepare a decent lunch for the two of them to consume. They would then leave together to the Floating Orchid Pavilion for work. Sura worked as an ordinary waiter while Ye Yin Zhu performed for the entire afternoon.

Once night fell, Floating Orchid Pavilion closed, and they would return home together. After dinner, they would practice for a while before going to their

respective beds, finishing the day tired.

When Ye Yin Zhu was in the Desolate Jade Sea, every day's life would be tranquil and disciplined like this. He loved this routine of life.

He discovered that ever since he'd moved here, Sura spoke less, even though he was still as hardworking as he was before. Once in awhile, he would sit alone, lost in thought and seemingly worried. When Yin Zhu asked him, Sura would always shake his head, silent.



In the blink of an eye, six days had already passed.

In the evening, after Ye Yin Zhu and Sura returned from the Floating Orchid Pavilion together, Xiang Luan and Hai Yang were already waiting for them in front of their door.

"Yin Zhu, where did you two go? You've returned so late," Xiang Luan said, dissatisfied. Clearly, the two girls had been waiting there for some time. Although she wore her school uniform, it was unable to conceal her brilliance. Also, whether she was angry or happy, her beauty caused Ye Yin Zhu's heart to be unable to stop from accelerating a bit.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and responded, "It's nothing. Sura and I just went for a walk." Sura had confessed to him that it was best if the others didn't know of their part-time jobs.

Opening the door, the two girls let themselves into the villa. Xiang Luan impatiently stated, "Tomorrow, the Freshman Competition finals will begin; how are your preparations?"

Ye Yin Zhu, startled, only now recalling that the one week resting period was already over. Scratching his head, he said, "The preparations don't matter. Senior, who are our opponents?"

Chapter 19 – Power Shaking Heavy Cavalry (I)

Xiang Luan sent him an unhappy glance, and Yin Zhu couldn't help but blank out because of the flirtatious expression within her beautiful eyes. "Allow me to explain what is happening. Tomorrow, our Divine Music division's opponent won't be as easy to deal with as those other divisions in the Magic Department. The four final divisions are the Magic Department's Summon division and our Divine Music division, as well as the two traditionally powerful specializations of the Martial Arts Department: the Heavy Sword division and Heavy Cavalry division.

"Each of them is not an easy to handle character. In fact, we're out of our league, however, our luck is still extraordinarily good. The traditional triumvirate of the Magic Department—the Spiritual, Spatial Domain, and Summon divisions—are not as balanced as they were in the past. The Summon division that has emerged is a new force to be reckoned with, allowing them to achieve total victory within the preliminary competition and enter the finals.

"In addition, because the Spiritual division and Spatial Domain division went all out against each other, they both forfeited, just like us during our match against the Summon division. This gave the two divisions a two losses: seven victory record, tying them both for third place. We, at second place, have an eight victory: one loss record. Because of this, we qualified for the finals and will later confront our first opponent, the first place division in the Martial Arts Department preliminary competition, which had also achieved a total victory record when they passed the qualifying round—the Heavy Cavalry division."

"Oh." Ye Yin Zhu nodded and looked to the side at Sura, rubbing his belly. Sura knew he was hungry and laughed slightly as he promptly left for the kitchen.

"Oh, my ass." Xiang Luan's temperament didn't resemble her gentle and soft outward appearance. Glaring at Ye Yin Zhu, she asked, "Are you even a little worried?"

Ye Yin Zhu, stunned, said, "Worried? Why would I be worried?"

Xiang Luan revealed an adorable, resigned expression to him. "I really don't

know what your brain is full of. At present, no one at the institution is optimistic about our Divine Music division match against the Heavy Cavalry division. Everyone believes we will lose.”

“So it’s just like before? Weren’t they also unsupportive about us previously?” Ye Yin Zhu said, smiling.

Xiang Luan stared blankly. Right! It was the same as before; nobody supported the Divine Music division, yet the Divine Music division still entered the finals of the Freshman Competition. One should know that this was the first time the Divine Music division had competed in the Freshman Competition since the beginning of history!

“Speaking like this, aren’t you very confident?”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “No. I am only going to compete with all of my strength.”

“Speaking with you is quickly becoming infuriating.” Xiang Luan was honestly a bit dissatisfied with Ye Yin Zhu’s attitude. “Are you still not making any preparations since you aren’t confident? Dean Nina permitted me to tell you that since we were able to advance to the final stage, she is already quite pleased. She doesn’t wish to see the five of you come to any harm tomorrow during the semifinals. If there is no chance to contend against your opponent, she is expecting you to immediately admit defeat.”

“I have methods to allow the others to remain uninjured.” A faint light flashed through Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes. Xiang Luan didn’t take note of it, but Hai Yang saw the resolute, determined light in his gaze.

“Praise Blue Dias, I am indeed preaching to deaf ears. I’m not talking anymore. I’m going back to bed.” Xiang Luan stood up to leave, kicking Ye Yin Zhu’s calf as she left in extreme anger.

Ye Yin Zhu forced a smile as he kneaded his leg and said to the still seated Hai Yang, “Senior Hai Yang, what’s up with Senior Xiang Luan? She seems to be angry.”

Hai Yang dully said, “Elder Sister Xiang Luan’s temperament has always been very blunt. She came with good intentions to warn you, and felt a little resentful

upon seeing that you apparently didn't care much. Be at ease, she is unlikely to be genuinely angry. Only—Ye Yin Zhu, you are aware of the circumstances surrounding our opponent tomorrow?”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head.

Hai Yang explained, “Heavy Cavalry—on the continent, this specialization plays a critical role in the military of any country. For instance, the famed Dragon Cavalry on the continent is a type of Heavy Cavalry. Also, within the Heavy Cavalry groups are the most powerful warriors. Their strength is extremely terrifying. In such a close range battle as the training field, it's impossible for us to have a chance to cast magic due to the cavalymen's strength, in addition to that of their steeds. To the best of my knowledge, tomorrow we will be facing the five-student team of the Heavy Cavalry division, which has two Intermediate Level Yellow Rank students, two Advanced Level Yellow Rank students, and a Primary Level Green Rank student.

“For a long time now, our Magic Department has always been the champion of the Freshman Competition. This is the first time the Heavy Cavalry division has seemingly been prepared ahead of time. Each of their five competing students are even equipped with magic-resistant equipment, meaning they must be aspiring for the championship.”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Senior, I have an idea for tomorrow. When the moment comes, I want you to support me, okay?”

Hai Yang didn't ask what Ye Yin Zhu's plan was. She only nodded, saying, “Okay.”

Ten days had already passed since the start of the new term. Although classes haven't officially started, the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was unprecedentedly bustling with noise and excitement today. The final stage of the Freshman Competition had begun at last. As far as the Milan students were concerned, the Freshman Competition finals' period of prosperity was their holiday.

The matches of the final stage were carried out over a period of three days. The first day was for the semifinals. In the morning, the Divine Music division would face the Heavy Cavalry division, while in the afternoon, the Summon

division faced off against the Heavy Sword division. The next elimination day would determine third place, following the losers of the two semifinals the previous day, while the winners advanced to the ultimate finals. The Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts conducted this third match in the central training field.

The central training field of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was in the middle of the two largest branches of the Martial Arts Department and Magic Department and was adjacent to the Mixed Residence District. It was five times the size of the training fields of all the other specializations. To the east of this huge circular training field was a rostrum that could hold three hundred people. Extending from either side of the rostrum and to the west were ten storied towers. These towers could hold the entire student population of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. The training field was as grandiose as a huge wrestling ring.

Ten people altogether were competing on this huge training field because it allowed ample space for everyone. At this moment, in the surrounding viewing platforms of this central training field, the students of the Magic and Martial Arts Departments were sitting according to their respective specializations, already waiting early. Accompanying the enthusiastic atmosphere were the echoing waves of constant shouting.

“Heavy Cavalry! ... Heavy Cavalry! ... Heavy Cavalry!” The Martial Arts Department’s student body was double that of the Magic Department. Five years worth of students used dou qi as the foundation for their crazy shouting, completely and vigorously suppressing the Magic Department section. After all, it was impossible for the voices of the mages to be louder than the warriors.

“Divine Music division! ... Divine Music division! ... Divine Music division!” Although the Magic Department section was not optimistic at all about the Divine Music division, due to the dignity of a mage and their noble arrogance, they naturally cheered for the mages of the Divine Music division. Unfortunately, their clamor had already been completely overshadowed by the Martial Arts Department.

The match had yet to begin, but the students of the two departments were already secretly competing. Teachers of either specialization amongst the

students also didn't prevent the shouting students of their respective divisions. The competition system was essential for stimulating student growth.

Ye Yin Zhu was currently standing to the side of the central training field, the other four competitors for the Divine Music division were also with him. Long black hair scattered over and past his shoulders. Ye Yin Zhu's mood appeared to be very calm as he quietly waited for the match to begin. Hai Yang stood beside him. "So you have really decided on doing this?"

Ye Yin Zhu nodded. "Yes, I have already decided."

"All right. Be careful."

Xue Ling and Lan Xi's expressions were both very tranquil, merely looking somewhat adoringly at Ye Yin Zhu in front of them. Only Kong Que's face expressed her arrogance, her eyes brimming with discontent.

At this moment, a voice from the rostrum attracted everyone's attention.

"Students, please be quiet." The voice was low, but it was full of unquestionable authority. All of the students and teachers currently present clearly felt their souls shake. The entire central training field immediately became quiet.

Faint violet rays of light set off. President Ferguson stood in the front of the stage. He hadn't used any amplification equipment. As the number one Spiritual Violet Rank Great Magister, his spiritual power was easily intimidating. The four simple words stunned the entire audience of thousands upon thousands of students. This was Violet Ranked strength.

Chapter 19 – Power Shaking Heavy Cavalry (II)

Ferguson’s gaze swept over everyone present, receiving the students’ veneration and attention. The wrinkles on his old, aged face heaped up because of his smile. “At last, the final stage of the Annual Freshman Competition has arrived once again. I am very glad that this year’s Freshman Competition has so many remarkable young individuals in it. I hesitate to speak pompously, but I hope that this year’s new members of the Milan Institution of Magic and Martial Arts, who are joining this big family of students, will learn from these elite students entering the final stage. Today, all your invested effort will be the backbone of the continent’s capital¹ in the future.”

Thunderous applause echoed. With the strength of a Violet Rank and a clear, simple speech, he’d made the students, especially the new students, aware that he was the senior Milan Institution President. As the Milan Empire’s Chief Court Great Magister, they must recognize him.

Ferguson clapped his hands, and the applauding ceased. “Next, the students of the Divine Music division will perform a song, << Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers >>. After this song finishes, the competing students of the Divine Music and Heavy Cavalry divisions will enter the field to start their match. I will personally referee this match.”

A hundred tall, sturdy Martial Arts students ran forward at lightning speed from the side and towards the middle of the training field, laying down tables and benches. Almost immediately after, a beautiful scene emerged before the students of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.

Attired in pink dresses with their long hair combed into ponytails, the Divine Music division stepped lithely forward. Their graceful and dazzling appearances were accented by heartwarming, delicate faces, and each figure assumed several gorgeous postures. Walking at the very front was the awe-inspiring, most beautiful woman of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts—Xiang Luan. Today, she appeared especially alluring, her remarkably exquisite

complexion being only faintly accentuated. Like the Creator's most perfect work of art, almost no one dared to believe that there would be such perfection in this world. All of these 81 female Divine Music division students could be described as beautiful, but at this very moment, the other 80 females were doomed to serve as a background in order to bring out Xiang Luan's brilliance.

A faint smile in her starry eyes, she embodied the word 'perfection' with her slim waist, delicate and perfect contours of her shapely bottom that was hidden by her dress, and those terrifyingly long legs. Even as she walked forward, she had already eclipsed all of those adjectives.

<< Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers >> echoed out, but for this moment, the overwhelming majority of the audience's souls still hadn't returned after seeing the breathtaking Xiang Luan.

Eighty-one people and close to twenty kinds of musical instruments simultaneously resounded. As none of the Divine Music mages embedded their music with magic, only the moving music was left.

Xiang Luan sat at the table and hugged her jade pipa like the treasure it was. She was the core of the song; the others were only there to accompany her. Jade fingers like spring green onions lightly plucked the pipa strings, and << Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers >> rose out in spirals. With the rotation of her hand, she played two or three notes, yet the audience already fell in love with the incomplete tune. From her body, people could completely understand why the Divine Music mage was called the most noble vocation.

The poignant music unceasingly drifted from her hands. Ye Yin Zhu exclaimed softly, "As the hazy dream starts to end, it transitions to a soft tone and enters the third phase of breaking. I didn't expect Xiang Luan's musical comprehension to actually be this deep with that blunt temperament of hers."

Hai Yang said, "Elder Sister Xiang Luan is the number one student in our Divine Music division. Others only know her as the number one beauty, but where could they have learned that she is the genius of the Divine Music division? As a third-year, she has already reached Advanced Level Yellow Rank. Even among the teachers of the Divine Music division, only a few can match her."

The large strings hummed like rapid rain while the small strings sliced through

the air like whispers. Humming sliced through the jumbled plucking, like large and small beads falling onto a jade plate. Everyone that had gathered on the field grew quiet as the song << Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers >> and its ‘master’ made everyone feel as if they were looking upon an imaginary scene, like a dream.

When << Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers >> concluded, Xiang Luan hugged the pipa close to her chest and bowed in the direction of the rostrum. A deafening applause shook the entire Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, causing the structure to shake. Previously, the Divine Music division hadn’t performed to the other division students due to their noble status. Combining the Divine Music division’s over-the-line participation in the Freshman Competition and this historically unprecedented performance, it gave all of the students of the other divisions an unforgettable memory. Several even thought, ‘What kind of performance would the Divine Music division give if they won today’s match?’ Imperceptibly, the song << Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers >> significantly increased the support for the Divine Music division.

The Divine Music division cheering squad passed in front of Ye Yin Zhu’s team of five. Xiang Luan stopped in front of Yin Zhu, smiled, and said, “Was that pleasant to hear?”

Ye Yin Zhu automatically nodded. “Senior’s pipa playing is really good.”

Xiang Luan smiled contentedly and said, “Since you haven’t given up hope, if you can win today’s match, I will perform the solo song that accompanies << Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers >> for you to view. My dancing surpasses my skill with the pipa.” Ye Yin Zhu watched Xiang Luan’s leisure strides as she left, her laugh sounding out like silver bells.

His nose caught the faint scent of fragrance, and Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes displayed a trace of a smile as they flickered with a confident and resolute gaze. He walked to the center of the training field alone.

Following Xiang Luan’s departure, the central training field gradually quieted. The final stages of the Annual Freshman Competition had begun at last. Everyone’s gazes converged on the center of the huge training field, watching on as the competitors for both sides gradually approached one another.

Black hair draped over his shoulders and scattered down his back, contrasting brightly against the spotlessly white Divine Celestial Protection robe he wore. His crystal clear eyes shone as bright as stars, his appearance handsome and graceful. A trace of a faint smile was apparent at the corner of his mouth as he calmly and confidently walked towards the center. At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu appeared to have already entered a bizarre rhythm, blending with and entering his surroundings.

Heavy, powerful footsteps sounded, accompanied by five tall, black figures from the other side that were advancing towards Ye Yin Zhu. Compared to them, Ye Yin Zhu appeared tiny. All five of these individuals were blond and wore thick black armor, resembling five mobile fortresses. It seemed that each had a height of at least two meters, with extremely broad shoulders, a hard, resolute face, and a valiant aura. The standard issue Heavy Cavalry five-meter heavy lance and two-meter broadsword hung respectively on their mounts via saddle rings and at their waists. Their tremendous and imposing manner assaulted everyone's senses, wholly capturing the audience's attention.

Of the five individuals Ye Yin Zhu saw, the three in the middle rode Maginot Iron Dragons that neared three meters in height and five meters in length, emanating an intangible, yet vicious aura. With the addition of the cavalymen's height of two meters, they closely resembled the Dragon Cavalry Ye Yin Zhu had last seen in Milan City. They even possessed a similar imposing, rich, and powerful air. Moreover, the other two individuals rode Earthbound Swift Dragons. Although these dragons were smaller than the Maginot Iron Dragons, they were significantly more lithe.

The standard five Dragon Cavalry configuration made the students of the Martial Arts Department cheer in near frenzy. The Dragon Cavalry was any country's absolute, primary military force. The Maginot Iron Dragons and Earthbound Swift Dragons were tamed dragons of high quantity, but their value was also noted at above ten thousand gold each. At this moment, it appeared to the institution's stadium that Ye Yin Zhu's intangible grandeur when he left the Divine Music division had already been overwhelmed.

In the rostrum, Nina's complexion changed. Groaning coldly, she faintly said, "The Heavy Cavalry division must have placed pressure in the background for

such things to appear; they might as well give these students some genuine dragons.”

1. (“capital” as in money/finance)

Chapter 19 – Power Shaking Heavy Cavalry (III)

The dean of the Heavy Cavalry division was a robust man of around forty years of age. He turned towards Nina after hearing her mocking comment, but he didn't say a word. His hard face didn't appear to have changed in the slightest, his eyes remaining concentrated on the training field.

Ferguson smiled slightly and whispered to Nina, "Your Divine Music division entering the finals has already taken a lot of people aback. Dean Nina, you shouldn't be too greedy!"

Competing against equal ranks, warriors were eternally not a match for mages. This was because on a battlefield, mages, without exception, possessed a magical beast. As a meat shield, a magical beast could completely hold back other equally ranked warriors. So long as a mage's magical might could be truly brought out, a warrior's end was something foreordained to be tragic.

The only exception to this kind of situation for a warrior was if the warrior were a Heavy Cavalryman, because Heavy Cavalrymen also possessed mounts. If their mount was strong enough, it could even contend against a mage's magical beast, giving them a chance of victory. Divine Music mages already had a difficult time possessing powerful magical beasts, and this time, five Heavy Cavalry students had entered the battle with a Dragon Cavalry configuration.

With the Earthbound Swift Dragon's speed and the Maginot Iron Dragon's powerful offensive and defensive capabilities, Ferguson completely and reasonably believed that the Divine Music division would once again conduct the match through team battle. The formidable power of music simply couldn't stand on equal footing with a Dragon Cavalrymen. Not even the Divine Celestial Protection could block the Dragon Cavalry's attack. Although Ye Yin Zhu had his sound blades, a Heavy Cavalryman possessed their equivalent dou qi. In all aspects, the Heavy Cavalry held an unconditional advantage. This only made Ferguson feel suspense within his heart; Ye Yin Zhu was only one person. Regardless of the outcome, he still wanted to see what nice surprise Ye Yin Zhu would once again show.

Both sides now faced one another at the center of the field. The general of the Heavy Cavalry division sat upright on the Maginot Iron Dragon's back. With the addition of his own stature, the pair already approached five meters in height. Before him, Ye Yin Zhu appeared very tiny.

"Heavy Cavalry division general. Nesta, second-year." He took his lance out from his saddle ring and lightly held a helmet in his left hand, performing the standard cavalryman rite.

"Ye Yin Zhu, Divine Music division general, first-year." Ye Yin Zhu placed his right hand over his heart, returning the other's courtesy with the standard nobility rite.

Nesta's stature was the most imposing of the five Heavy Cavalry division competitors. His bones were very large, and his hard face didn't show even the slightest emotion. Facing the "tiny" Ye Yin Zhu, he didn't appear to even slightly underestimate his opponent. "Please select the match style."

"Wolfpack." Ye Yin Zhu replied with a simple two words.

Nesta's eyes finally displayed some surprise. "Wolfpack?"

Ye Yin Zhu nodded.

Wolfpack was the third type of competition. Different from a one-on-one battle and a team battle, a wolf pack competition was where both sides sent out one competitor to battle. The winner could continue to fight until they lose to an opponent. This was not a best three out of five match; instead, one party must prevail over all of their competitors from the other side in order to obtain the ultimate match victory.

Upon Ye Yin Zhu's confirmation, everyone was in an uproar. In everyone's eyes, it was already very dangerous if the Divine Music division chose a team battle. There might have been some slight chance, however. Ye Yin Zhu actually chose a wolfpack battle. In other words, every frail Divine Music mage must face the wild, ferocious attacks of the Heavy Cavalry. The match's last trace of suspense appeared to have already disappeared.

Only, in the rostrum, Ferguson's face exposed a praising smile. He nodded slowly and said, "Good choice. Avoiding the Heavy Cavalry's most advantageous

team charge and teamwork, perhaps Ye Yin Zhu really can give us a miracle.” In fact, the majority of the divisions didn’t know that the Heavy Cavalry was the most powerful in a team battle.

“Senior Hai Yang, are we really not going to be helping Yin Zhu?” Lan Xi, somewhat anxious, asked softly.

Hai Yang looked at her briefly. “Do you think we can even provide help to him?”

Raising her head to look towards the huge figures of the Dragon Cavalry, Lan Xi couldn’t help but become deathly pale. She lightly shook her head. The previously enraged Kong Que lowered her head.

Before the match began, Ye Yin Zhu had already identified that he would be using wolfpack match tactics, but he was the only one of the Divine Music division that would step forward. In other words, if the other side defeated him, then it was equivalent to defeating the entire Divine Music division team. If he wanted to win, he would have to defeat these five talented opponents one by one. Like everyone had believed, if the Divine Music mages confronted an assault by the Heavy Cavalry, even the most simplest of contact would cause fatal injuries. Ye Yin Zhu wanted to protect his comrades. As a result, upon entering the finals, he’d chosen wolfpack. He was responsible for everyone else, and at the same time, he also had a great deal of self-confidence.

The five students competing for the Heavy Cavalry division slowly retreated to the side. Ye Yin Zhu didn’t appear to be returning to his side of the field in order to set up his musical instrument for a performance, such was everyone’s expectations. Instead, he hugged the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance zither, which had materialized after a wave of his left hand, and settled the zither in the crook of his left arm.

The match began. The first to appear from the Heavy Cavalry division was a student on an Earthbound Swift Dragon. Faint yellow dou qi glittered at the tip of his lance. The students of the Martial Arts Department within the audience increased the volume of their cheers, the sound rushing towards Ye Yin Zhu.

This was the first time Ye Yin Zhu had confronted Dragon Cavalry. Although the Earthbound Swift Dragon’s stature wasn’t very big, as its two pairs of dragon

legs stepped forward, its assault power was just like that of a hurricane's. Several hundred meters were consumed in a mere several blinks of an eye before this berserk force of wind at last reached Ye Yin Zhu.

The sharp tip of the lance emitted a faint cold light. Even if the Earthbound Swift Dragon's speed and Intermediate Level Yellow Rank dou qi's strength confronted a thick wall, it would still be able to completely pierce through.

Ye Yin Zhu hugged the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance and stood in place, not even making a movement to dodge. Soon, the Earthbound Swift Dragon's presence gradually grew larger, yet his expression didn't appear to change in the slightest. A great many students of the Martial Arts Department were already silently cursing him in their hearts. 'This Divine Music division general is already terrified.'

"Weng——" Ye Yin Zhu moved at last. As the Earthbound Swift Dragon dashed towards him, only 10 meters away, his right hand streaked across the zither strings with lightning speed. Ye Yin Zhu's sudden sonic boom echoed out.

Sonic boom was always exceedingly more powerful the smaller the distance. Ye Yin Zhu had chosen this kind of timed release to give his opponent an attack on all sides.

A Heavy Cavalryman's defensive power was exceedingly higher than a mage's strength, but their spiritual defense was weaker than any mage's. This suddenly emerging sonic boom from a Yellow Rank mage could make them briefly absent-minded, not to mention that he was just a first-year Heavy Cavalry student. His original posture during the berserk attack immediately became sluggish, his brain completely sinking into blankness.

The ten meter distance was covered by the Earthbound Swift Dragon in merely an instant, having already arrived in a flash. As Ye Yin Zhu's right hand streaked across the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance, he'd already jumped up from the ground. His entire body burst with yellow rays of light. In midair, Ye Yin Zhu's posture was still as graceful as before. He was like a cloud as he hovered over his opponent.

Chapter 19 – Power Shaking Heavy Cavalry (IV)

Without any excessive or complicated movements, Ye Yin Zhu jumped three meters straight up into the air and lifted his right knee, his body just clearing the lance. At this moment, the cavalryman’s brain was still blank, his spirit still vacant.

Boom—— The cavalryman’s heavy armor-clad chest suddenly crashed against Ye Yin Zhu’s right knee. The Earthbound Swift Dragon’s speed was completely converted into Ye Yin Zhu’s attack power. That two meters tall, heavy armor-clad large body flew away, unexpectedly crashing into the ground an extra ten meters outside the field in a flash.

His helmet traced an arc through the air, landing with a loud clang. A sizable indentation appeared on his heavy chest armor. The next moment, his body collapsed to the ground with a loud thud, blood forcing its way out of his mouth. This previously aggressive Dragon Cavalryman was now completely unconscious.

Without its master, the Earthbound Swift Dragon was brushed aside by Ye Yin Zhu. The previously powerful attack had merely sent Ye Yin Zhu flying backwards a couple of meters. In the sky, he softly turned and descended quietly to the ground.

Pin-drop silence prevailed among the ten thousand people gathered at the central training field. Everyone was overwhelmed with shock, eyes wide, as they couldn’t believe everything that had just occurred.

From start to finish, Ye Yin Zhu had merely executed a few simple movements, but these simple movements had thoroughly dispatched the Dragon Cavalryman atop the Earthbound Swift Dragon.

A mage had used his physical power to rapidly dispatch a Dragon Cavalryman. This was enough to stupefy everyone. The majority of the audience had already overlooked the sonic boom Ye Yin Zhu created using his zither.

Ferguson’s eyes shined, matched equally by Nina’s eyes. The Divine Music

division cheering squad rose with glittering eyes.

“Divine Music division, go! ... Divine Music division, win!”

The students of the Magic Department finally had a chance to express their feelings, their crazed cheering echoing out unceasingly. The entire audience once again flared up. Only, the protagonist had changed.

Wolfpack battle tactics meant there was no chance to stop. Even though the megatsunami of joyous shouting hadn't ceased, the second Heavy Cavalry student already charged out from his party. This time, Ye Yin Zhu faced an opponent riding a Maginot Iron Dragon.

A Maginot Iron Dragon was significantly slower than an Earthbound Swift Dragon, but it moved as if it was a mobile fortress. At this moment, the Heavy Cavalry division's scorn for Ye Yin Zhu had completely vanished. This new student was also at the Intermediate Level Yellow Rank; he pressed forward atop his Maginot Iron Dragon, slowly advancing towards Ye Yin Zhu.

This time, Ye Yin Zhu didn't wait, instead walking towards his opponent. His stride wasn't quick at all, resembling a civilian's sedate pace. The Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance zither that was previously in the crook of his left arm had already returned to his space ring. Unarmed and defenseless, he faced the heavily armed Dragon Cavalryman.

Closer and closer, they approached one another. At this very moment, every spectator held their breath, waiting for another brilliant collision.

“AH——” With a thunderous bellow, the five-meter long lance in the sky transformed into the silhouette of a yellow spear. At the same time, the Maginot Iron Dragon's huge skull knocked against Ye Yin Zhu's chest.

Ye Yin Zhu's absolute speed wasn't very fast, at least several times slower than Sura's. Even with that, his speed was significantly faster than the Maginot Iron Dragon's head, which was more widely known for its defensive power. Ye Yin Zhu moved to the side in a flash, evading the Maginot Iron Dragon's strike, and confronted the dou qi shrouded spear silhouette. His movements were simple and quick, but his actions seemed close to suicidal. He welcomed the sharp lance by leaping up.

With similar yellow dou qi condensing around his right fist, Ye Yin Zhu's eyes emitted a brilliant radiance as his fist rocketed forward with power, smashing against the spear silhouette.

The Dragon Cavalryman felt the impact as he stabbed forth with his full momentum at the opponent a dozen times with his spear. Except, Ye Yin Zhu's fist was a direct blow. Regardless of his desire to change his spear's direction, he was unable to escape the dou qi-shrouded fist. All he could do was condense his own dou qi at the tip of his spear as he firmly struck Ye Yin Zhu's hard exterior.

The flesh of a fist was incomparable to the sharpness of a cavalryman's spear. Even with 'similar' Yellow Rank dou qi, the outcome appeared to be inevitable.

Suddenly, as the fist narrowly touched the spear. Ye Yin Zhu's right hand changed; his fist became an open palm and strangely rotated. What should have originally been a direct strike of spear tip against fist changed instantly to Yin Zhu unexpectedly grabbing the spear tip.

The cavalryman, rather than becoming alarmed, was jubilant. Exerting himself and yanking back on the spear with both arms at the same time, he shouted loudly, "Qi!" As long as he could eliminate this Divine Music division's general, then the rest of the battle was as good as won.

Someone, indeed, was picked up. Unfortunately, it wasn't Ye Yin Zhu. As he grabbed the lance in that split second, Ye Yin Zhu's two legs had already fallen onto the Maginot Iron Dragon's huge head. Despite the opponent's massive weight that surpassed the 200 kilogram heavy cavalry, the cavalryman's exertions generated a force that actually allowed Ye Yin Zhu to lift him off of the Maginot Iron Dragon's back.

At this very moment, the grace within Ye Yin Zhu's eyes had already completely disappeared; all that remained was domination. Faint violet light replaced the clarity of his eyes, his black hair fluttering behind him. Although he was far smaller than his opponent, from a spectator's perspective, he now seemed rather tall.

For the Maginot Iron Dragon, an enemy had suddenly stepped on its head, causing it to bellow angrily as it tried to throw Ye Yin Zhu off. The huge body suddenly turned around. At this moment, it had already sunk into a violent rage.

Ye Yin Zhu lifted the lance in his right hand and stepped forward. In a flash, he moved from the Maginot Iron Dragon's head to its back. "Be quiet." With a subdued shout, he heavily stomped his right foot down on the Iron Dragon's back. The Maginot Iron Dragon, widely known for its defensive power, actually wailed. Its four powerful limbs weakened at the same time, causing it to collapse against the ground on its stomach.

"I concede." Originally the cavalryman thought he could continue contending against Ye Yin Zhu's wave of dou qi attacks, but he just saw his Maginot Iron Dragon unexpectedly collapse from a single blow from Ye Yin Zhu. He lost all notions of winning, conceding immediately.

Lance in hand, he gently set the cavalryman on the ground. Ye Yin Zhu, still standing on the Maginot Iron Dragon's back, already recovered his usual grace. At this moment, he felt somewhat strange; he didn't know why his strength had unexpectedly increased by so much. Even though his Level 2 Yellow Rank dou qi was equivalent to an Intermediate Level Green Rank, thus placing his dou qi completely above his opponent's, he had just lifted his opponent and forced a Maginot Iron Dragon to collapse without using any dou qi—only through pure strength. In that split second when his hand had grabbed the lance, he'd clearly felt a warm flow well up from within the depths of his body. He had performed those movements without taking time to think. A frantic power seemed to pass through his body, and the depths of his clear eyes were now more than a touch violet.

"Dean Nina, it would be better for your Divine Music division to give this student to our Heavy Sword Warrior division. Letting him stay with your Divine Music division would just waste such good talent." A hunchbacked old man with a wretched appearance spoke up from behind Nina.

Nina snorted. "In your dreams! Old monkey, why don't you have Nesta come over here? He is publicly known as a genius warrior."

The so-called old monkey, the Dean of the Heavy Sword Warrior division, laughed mischievously and said, "Tie Bi; that guy is a monster. Today's match is really odd. Your Magic Department student actually relied on Martial Arts to defeat our Warrior Department. It makes me feel such grief!"

"It wasn't Martial Arts; it was power, pure power." Having not spoken since the

beginning to now, Dean Tie Bi of the Heavy Cavalry division coldly stated these words. Even though his voice was ice-cold, he looked at Ye Yin Zhu with a somewhat scorching gaze. This gaze wasn't because his students were losing the match or because he was angry.

Chapter 20 – Summon, Zi (I)

Hehe. Zi appears!

The match continued. Against everyone’s expectations, the third competitor of the Heavy Cavalry division for this battle was unexpectedly General Nesta.

His right hand held the cavalryman spear and tilted it down towards the floor, imitating the posture of Buddha lightly grabbing a rice straw. Nesta didn’t resemble the previous two competitors who’d immediately launched attacks against Ye Yin Zhu. Pressing forward for twenty steps, he and his Maginot Iron Dragon slowly walked up to Ye Yin Zhu. As steady as a mountain, Nesta currently exuded an imposing aura. His gaze was serene, but this calmness brimmed with an inexhaustible battlelust. His every movement was very steady, without even a trace of a flaw.

“Ye Yin Zhu, your strength has my respect.” As Nesta coldly spoke, the Maginot Iron Dragon stopped thirty meters away from Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled tranquilly, firmly grasping the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither that had appeared once more. He’d already felt, since the beginning of the fight, that he would be facing his most challenging battle in the entirety of the Freshman Competition here. On the surface, Nesta was not as dangerous when compared to Rolande’s Green Dragon, but Yin Zhu’s instincts said otherwise. This Heavy Cavalryman before him was one of the strongest students he had ever seen and was currently his most pressuring opponent.

“Out of respect for your power, I don’t want my companions to tire you anymore. Let us make this a fair battle. If you defeat me, you defeat the entire Heavy Cavalry division. Since it appears that you are the plenipotentiary of the Divine Music division, I will also represent my division.” The calmness in Nesta’s eyes was gradually ignited. He slowly lifted his cavalryman spear from the ground.

Ye Yin Zhu looked at him with some amazement. “Won’t you be very disadvantaged this way?”

Nesta smiled calmly and said, “If I need others to help me tire you out in order

to be able to defeat you, then that kind of victory, as far as I'm concerned, has no meaning. My goal is to continuously improve my strength. This can only be accomplished by constantly challenging stronger people. Come, make me acknowledge your magic-martial arts combination."

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. He pressed his right hand against his chest and conducted the standard mage etiquette towards Nesta. This lofty opponent had also won his respect and affection.

"Sha——" Nesta exhaled with a shout. His left hand was poised beneath his chest, pressing down against the Maginot Iron Dragon. As the Maginot Iron Dragon's body dropped down, Nesta's five-meter lance shot out towards Ye Yin Zhu like lightning. With an immense battlelust and tremendous vigor, he finally transcended past the bottleneck of the Yellow Rank.

Faint green dou qi wove downwards from the tip of the lance to the butt. The Maginot Iron Dragon's powerful momentum allowed Nesta to approach Ye Yin Zhu instantly. When his lance thrust out, however, the sharp tip was still approximately three meters away from Ye Yin Zhu. Did he make a mistake? No, of course not.

Green dou qi finished condensing, coating the sharp tip of the spear in some type of substance. In the blink of an eye, it extended the spear tip by a little over three meters, surpassing the distance to touch Ye Yin Zhu's chest. The sharp tip exuded a suffocating feeling, leaving no doubt as to its destructive power.

"Battle Edge?" While spectating the battle from within the rostrum, Ferguson couldn't help uttering those words of amazement.

Dean Tie Bi of the Heavy Cavalry division calmly said, "To be able to use Green Rank dou qi to successfully execute Battle Edge, from what I've seen, Nesta is the first to do so. If all goes well, within 10 years, he will become a Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander. Within 20 years, he will become the youngest Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander in history. Perhaps his aptitude can't compare with the two boys of the Violet Clan, but no one else can compare with his dedication to improving his strength."

Battle Edge—dou qi evolution release. Generally speaking, this skill could only be used when dou qi had been cultivated to Cyan Rank or higher. A strong

warrior could rely on Battle Edge to inflict damage to an enemy up to around three meters away. Dou qi enhanced strength, while Battle Edge covered wide distances. Battle Edge required an extremely high amount of dou qi as a requirement in order for the dou qi to be compressed greatly. Without a strong foundation and perfect dou qi control, it was impossible to use Battle Edge. Moreover, Nesta used Primary Level Green Rank dou qi to unexpectedly create Battle Edge. This in itself was already an odd event.

Gasps filled the spectator seat as the battle on the training field continued. Soon, the lightning-quick Battle Edge had already reached its destination. Ye Yin Zhu had yet to execute a sonic boom, immediately extending his Divine Celestial Protection instead. All of a sudden, the milky white radiance and the faint green Battle Edge collided in the air.

The spherical milky white light flickered as the Battle Edge's piercing blow was diffused momentarily, the ear-piercing screech causing everyone to wince. The impact behind Nesta's Battle Edge was rapidly weakening, while the physical lance shaft travelled increasingly closer to the Divine Celestial Protection .

Ye Yin Zhu knew he couldn't retreat. Nesta was entirely different from his previous two opponents. If he withdrew, he would have no opportunity to counterattack. Nesta would follow through with his damn attack and destroy him. Therefore, he couldn't retreat and would instead exploit the Divine Celestial Protection's cushioning. His left foot stepped forward at once, his right fist striking directly out. It unexpectedly headed straight towards the spear tip.

Could it be that Ye Yin Zhu wanted to use the same tactics as last time? No, of course not. Identical tactics used successively in such a short time was absolutely courting death. This time, he was genuinely confronting his opponent's dou qi.

Yellow and green, these two colors of dou qi, shrouded his fist and Nesta's spear tip respectively as they collided. For a split second, space seemed to have frozen.

As a matter of fact, Ye Yin Zhu's fist and Nesta's lance didn't really collide with each other; the collision was between their dou qi. Yellow and green dou qi in close proximity to one another led to mutual compression. The two differently colored rays of light compressed one another, causing them to unexpectedly

distort space.

Ye Yin Zhu stood tall on the ground, Nesta stood aloof and remote on his dragon. At this time, upon judging the weight and size of both Nesta and his dragon, they evidently held an unconditional advantage. Ye Yin Zhu couldn't be regarded as robust at all; in front of them, he really was insignificant. This small body, however, relied on the power of his fist. At this moment, the forceful block against Nesta's attack actually prevented that huge Maginot Iron Dragon from taking a single step forward. Ye Yin Zhu's legs were like stakes in the ground, not retreating in the slightest.

Level 2 Yellow Rank Bamboo Dou Qi was equivalent to Intermediate Level Green Rank dou qi. In terms of dou qi, Ye Yin Zhu was indeed stronger than Nesta. Since the disparity between their dou qis wasn't large, if Ye Yin Zhu were to only rely on his Dou Qi, he definitely could not defend against Nesta's attack. In order to defend against it, he'd utilized his strength. His body responded by bursting forth with physical power.

As Nesta's spear stabbed down, Ye Yin Zhu's heart rang with a voice saying, 'Don't retreat.' It was as if his Pride told him not to retreat. A warmth circulated through his body once more until his fist genuinely struck out, blocking Nesta's attack. Ye Yin Zhu realized that his power had unexpectedly grown to a terrifying degree.

Boom——

The pair had concentrated all of their strength into a dou qi confrontation. At last, a tremendous concussion burst out. The loud explosion unexpectedly caused Nesta and his Maginot Iron Dragon to draw back ten steps before standing firm once more.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't fall back, the mantra that repeated within his heart prevented him from recoiling. The defensive shield that the Divine Celestial Protection emitted had already transformed into a speck of white light and disappeared, however, as Ye Yin Zhu's complexion appeared somewhat pale.

The entire audience was absolutely silent. Everyone held their breaths as they watched this world-shaking, decisive battle.

His eyes once more flashed with a purple haze. Ye Yin Zhu sat down on the

spot, taking the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance Zither out—which he had been carrying— so it rested evenly atop his knees.

Chapter 20 – Summon, Zi (III)

Similar to the Divine Celestial Protection, the Jade Silk was also uncontaminated by blood; Ye Yin Zhu didn't know whether this was because it had once absorbed the source of life or not. At this moment, the Jade Silk appeared to be dark green in color, sparkling and translucent. Used to its fullest extent, the Bamboo Attack's offensive power was comparable to that of a divine weapon, else it wouldn't have been able to give Nesta such a huge injury. The dou qi Ye Yin Zhu utilized was not enough to kill a magical beast with such high defense such as the Maginot Iron Dragon in a single blow. The power the Jade Silk contributed couldn't go unnoticed.

Crawling up from the ground, Ye Yin Zhu stumbled a bit before standing firm, looking towards the distant Nesta. He forced a smile and said, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to kill your dragon. If I hadn't gone all out, I would've been unable to block your attack."

By this time, Nesta had also dragged himself upright. His body was indeed tyrannical. He wiped away the blood dripping from his mouth and nose, brazenly stating, "That doesn't matter. It seems to me there should be no difference between this competition and a battlefield. Going all out in a confrontation is enjoyable. I'm delighted—I haven't received such a wound in a long time."

"Concede; your injury is worse than mine," Ye Yin Zhu said. His opinion of this Heavy Cavalryman had increased even more, and he did not want to unleash another attack. This was the first time he used Bamboo Defense and Bamboo Attack when facing an enemy, and it was far more powerful than he had imagined.

Nesta shook his head and said, "From a competitive perspective, you killed my mount, meaning I should already have lost. I still have fighting strength, however, and am thus unlikely to give up. It seems that my original desire to keep this a secret until the final match was futile. Arise, my partner—Degas." Shouting loudly, he lifted his left hand high, and a red Six-Point Star emerged and shone brightly from within his palm. A golden ray of light soared out, flying

high into the sky in the blink of an eye.

“I agree.” Ye Yin Zhu looked with amazement at his adversary, instantly realizing, “You had another mount... no wonder I felt that your Maginot Iron Dragon didn’t suit you at all.”

A warrior’s mount could be replaced, unlike a mage’s magical beast. Similarly, a warrior also had only one chance in his entire life to enter into a beast contract. Only when a warrior genuinely found his ideal companion would he enter into such a contract. Once the contract was completed, this magical beast would accompany him until death. This kind of beast contract, interlinked with its master’s heart, produced the most powerful kind of strength. A warrior couldn’t summon his magical beast; he could only, by means of a contract, call out for his mount. Generally, the contracted beast wouldn’t be far from the warrior.

The deep, resounding dragon cry echoed from far away, the sound rolling forward as a red cloud quickly flew across the sky and towards the field.

Nesta bowed towards the rostrum and requested, “Please open the defensive shield and allow my mount to come in.” Since the start of the match, the central training field’s defensive shield had been managed by Ferguson.

Ferguson looked up at the sky with astonishment, automatically controlling his magic and using his power as the institution’s president to immediately open up the defensive shield. At this moment, the incoming arrival surprised him. As a dragon mage, he naturally knew what was flying through the sky towards the field. It was a Red Dragon like his Xhosa! Although its aura was far inferior to Xhosa, the Red Dragon actually produced a slightly passable feeling. As a genuine Gigantic Dragon, a Red Dragon was ranked higher than a Green Dragon. He couldn’t help but secretly lament within his heart, ‘Students nowadays are indeed becoming increasingly powerful. Just now, second-year Nesta also unexpectedly possesses a genuine Gigantic Dragon.’

One must know that each and every genuine Gigantic Dragon was a growth-type magical beast. Once it matured, a genuine Gigantic Dragon had a strength of rank 7 or higher. A Red Dragon was known for its fire-inclined attack power as a Fire-attribute Gigantic Dragon. Regardless of its physical power, it could still

utilize Fire Magic, making it violently powerful.

“Tie Bi, at the end of the match, I will need you to give me an explanation.”

“I will.”

For the first time, Nesta’s eyes displayed a gentle gaze as the red cloud in the sky neared. Ye Yin Zhu was also able to clearly see a Gigantic Dragon over seven meters long. It was a bit larger than Rolande’s Green Dragon, having matured further than the Green Dragon. Sensing the Red Dragon’s inner flame, he couldn’t help but inhale sharply. One must know that when he’d previously prevailed over the Green Dragon, it was because Rolande had already lost the ability to fight. Another reason had been his sudden sneak attack. A Red Dragon was significantly more powerful than a Green Dragon; along with Nesta’s valiant fighting strength, how could he confront them in the next battle? For the first time, Ye Yin Zhu felt powerless. After all, when fighting a Dragon Cavalry, he had to face not only the rider but the mount as well!

The Red Dragon spiraled through the sky, its two wings suddenly vanishing as it slowly dropped down beside Nesta. Nesta joyously whistled and abruptly leapt up to sit atop the Red Dragon’s thick and broad back. He waved his left hand and a brand new spear appeared out of thin air and into his hand’s grasp. Although a space ring required magic to use, some advanced rings only required a miniscule amount of spiritual force.

The spear in Nesta’s hand was just as long as Austin’s dragonspear, reaching eight meters in length and surpassing the length of the Red Dragon. The spear appeared to be dark red with four bloody grooves on its shaft. Sunlight shone down on it as the dark red rays of light weaved around the spear, flowing like actual blood.

“Ye Yin Zhu, this is my real weapon and mount. The spear is named Blood Soul, and my partner, Degas, is a Fire-attribute growth-type rank 5 Red Dragon. In this next battle, I will use all of my strength. If you have a magical beast, it is better to summon it now.”

Ye Yin Zhu slowly shook his head. “I don’t have a magical beast. Since you can still fight, let’s begin at once. I will present you with the song << Flock of Geese on the Shore >>.” His gaze changed, the clarity gradually replaced with a violet

glint. A light silver luster appeared in the depths of his eyes. No longer speaking, he summoned the the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance once more, his eight fingers already pressed on its strings.

Nesta, atop the Red Dragon Degas, soared upwards, reaching a hundred meters in altitude in the blink of an eye. His ensouled dragonspear in hand, the dark red radiance released a dazzling light, sharply contrasting the faint green dou qi taking shape. The Red Dragon abruptly roared, wildly spraying out a mouthful of flames. Because of the emerging green blaze and Nesta's dragonspear, the atmosphere combusted, a wave of heat rippling out. With the help of boundless concussive force, it directly shot towards Ye Yin Zhu.

An eight meter long Blood Soul Spear, a rank 5 Red Dragon, a Green Rank warrior; this kind of ensemble wasn't something an Indigo Rank warrior without a mount would have the battle strength to face, not to mention Ye Yin Zhu who was merely a mage.

A scorching stream of air appeared, seeming to tear the sky asunder. Nesta and his dragon resembled a hybrid red-green lightning bolt, charging towards Ye Yin Zhu from the sky like a meteor catching up with the moon. His genuine strength was not limited to just his dragon and spear; he also had his dou qi attribute. In the battle earlier, Nesta merely used pure dou qi to fight Ye Yin Zhu. At this moment, he released his dou qi attribute—Fire. Ye Yin Zhu's Bamboo Dou Qi was categorized as having a Wood attribute, which was widely known to contain life energy to help automatically recover quickly. In addition, Fire attributed dou qi just so happened to counter Wood attributed dou qi; the rank disparity between both of their dou qis had already vanished.

Ye Yin Zhu sat upright, having not moved from his seat. Both of his hands brimmed with emotion as he caressed the strings of his zither. Deep red zither magic revolved around him, fluttering in the wind. At this very moment, he'd even given up on using his Intermediate Level Green Rank dou qi.

"Quickly, stop them," Nina anxiously cried to Ferguson.

"No—wait a minute!" Faint violet magic already circled around Ferguson. He was prepared to interfere with the match at any time, but he didn't know why Ye Yin Zhu still seemed so calm and graceful. From beginning to end, he felt that it

wasn't likely for Yin Zhu to lose. As a result, he endured silently without interfering.

Chapter 20 – Summon, Zi (IV)

As Nesta drew increasingly closer to Ye Yin Zhu, Ferguson’s heart tensed even more. Although he could easily interfere with this match at his level of strength, he didn’t know when he should do so.

“Quick! President, if Ye Yin Zhu suddenly dies, I...” Right as Nina began to speak incoherently, the situation on the training field changed once again.

Sitting upright in the same place, Ye Yin Zhu still hadn’t begun playing. He suddenly lifted his head and stood, welcoming the scorching heat that flew towards him through the sky. His clear eyes brimmed with longing as he cried out softly.

“Zi——!”

The magical rays of light surrounding Ye Yin Zhu vanished as a milky white halo of light, similar to the light emitted from the Divine Celestial Protection, ignited. In the depths of that milky white halo of light, a ball of violet light burst into flames from between Yin Zhu’s eyebrows. In a flash, the violet light spread through the rest of his body.

No magic Six-Pointed Star appeared. Instead, an illusionary violet silhouette unexpectedly emerged from Yin Zhu’s body.

As the illusionary body turned into reality, one could see violet hair, violet eyes, a tall stature, and an ice-cold appearance. His face resembling a firm and substantial wall, this figure stood in front of Yin Zhu, defending him.

Neither of them spoke, for they didn’t need words to communicate.

Zi lifted his head, the essence of his gaze meeting the Red Dragon Degas that dived down. There wasn’t any use of dou qi, since no rays of light manifested. He merely waved his two fists.

In this moment, Ye Yin Zhu had already returned to his seated position on the ground, certain that Zi could block the blazing “meteor” that rapidly dove down towards him. His eight fingers caressed the zither strings, and a muffled zither

song echoed out as his fingers plucked at the strings.

How much power did a Gigantic Dragon have as it dove, in addition to its Heavy Cavalryman rider using all of his strength? It was no longer sufficient to describe their weight with a numerical value—not to mention the inclusion of dou qi and the Gigantic Dragon's Fire-attributed magic. All of this was superimposed onto a rushing onslaught. The only thing to confront them were Zi's two fists.

Boom——

Clashing in an instant, the red-green colored light dispersed and scattered. The powerful defensive shield of the entire central training field suddenly trembled.

The Gigantic Dragon and human rider unexpectedly ricocheted away. The Red Dragon emitted an alarmed dragon's cry while Nesta's smothered groan called out.

That eight meter long Blood Soul Spear violently shuddered, issuing forth a light, groaning cry. The Red Dragon once more flew upwards. It was just that its speed at this moment was significantly slower than it had been before.

Yes, Zi had used his two fists to block the all-out attack of Nesta and his Red Dragon. At this moment, Zi's legs were knee-deep into the ground. With him at the center, there was a ten meter wide radius of cracked ground. Only the area where Ye Yin Zhu sat stayed intact.

"Foul; that's illegal. He actually had an outsider come to assist in the match. From what I see, he's at least an Indigo Rank warrior," the Heavy Sword division Dean Lao Houzi exclaimed with shock.

Ferguson's appearance was grave as he watched the center of the training field attentively. He shook his head and said, "No. Although he is a warrior, he is not human. I do not sense a human aura from him. That summoning command is actually the legendary Ancient Life Summoning."

Tie Bi's face also revealed alarm at this moment. He naturally knew how powerful Nesta's attack was. Even he absolutely didn't want to face the multi-sided internal impact that attack would have produced. "Are you saying that the outsider is a magical beast? A human avatar...besides the Netherworld Spirit,

only rank 9 magical beasts can have one. His strength doesn't appear as powerful as a rank 9 beast, however." If it were a rank 9 magical beast, it would be impossible to make Zi's legs sink into the ground, even if Nesta and his Red Dragon had attacked together.

Ferguson gravely said, "He is by no means a Netherworld Spirit. All of this has already exceeded the scope of my knowledge. I'm afraid that only the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda elders can explain what is going on."

The explosion from the collision hadn't affected Ye Yin Zhu's performance. At this very moment, his zither song was already in full swing.

<< Flock of Geese on the Shore >>

Geese are guests amongst the mist of the highest heavens. As they fly in formation and cry out, it was difficult to determine their origin and destination difficult to decipher.

A dark red magic circle rippled out, using Ye Yin Zhu's body as the center and dispersing out in all directions.

Hearing Yin Zhu's zither song, the lines of Zi's face softened slightly. He effortlessly extracted his legs from the ground—his movements smooth and natural. Evidently, he hadn't sustained any injuries from his opponents' attack just now.

At this moment, the one whose heart was the most shocked was Nesta. To him, Zi's two fists didn't resemble human hands. That sudden strike felt as though he'd crashed against a hidden silver-metal mountain. His arms were already completely numb. The powerful backlash had caused him to spew out a mouthful of blood. Not only had his Fire Attributed Dou Qi not even harmed his opponent in the slightest, it had caused backlash. If not for his Red Dragon Degas blocking the majority of the rebound, he feared that he would have been unable to steadily ride on the back of his dragon.

Nesta felt Degas shake, shuddering from the scent it caught rather than from any injuries it sustained. Within the Red Dragon race, a mature Red Dragon could reach rank 8. Only a magical beast of higher rank could possibly cause a Red Dragon to tremble. Dragons were an arrogant race, however; Nesta had never heard of any magical beast on the continent that could make a Red Dragon react

like this.

Looking down at Zi, who stood beside Ye Yin Zhu, the battlelust in Nesta's heart died down for the first time. He didn't know whether he should attack again. Then he heard << Flock of Geese on the Shore >>. The melody rose and fell, the sostenuto unceasingly beautiful to listen to. The main key was beautiful yet also moving. The elegantly flowing music was both meaningful and fresh. It caused his nervous mood to ease significantly.

A dark red halo of light had already covered the entire training field at this very moment. Ye Yin Zhu looked towards Zi and suddenly discovered that his heart was at peace. Having Zi by his side, his longing had eased, his mood joyful. This allowed him to completely immerse himself into << Flock of Geese on the Shore >>.

Dark red magic began transforming. Beginning around Ye Yin Zhu's body, the color gradually lightened, the dark red gradually disappearing. It was replaced with a faint yellow. Although the color was very light, it was nevertheless especially clear.

Everyone watched this scene with wide eyes. Increasing in rank was not prohibited during the competition. According to the Rainbow Ranking System, however, Red Rank should become Orange Rank. Before their eyes, Ye Yin Zhu's change had clearly violated this rule. Yellow, that light yellow color clearly represented Primary Level Yellow Rank! If they were aware that Ye Yin Zhu's magical rank already reached Primary Level Green Rank, they wouldn't know if their eyes would pop from their sockets.

Pure Zither Heart; Ye Yin Zhu cultivated his Pure Zither Heart for 16 years, finally transcending in rank at this moment. He didn't rise to Yellow Rank as the spectators had thought; instead, the yellow signified that he had reached the second stage of the Zither Sect cultivation—Courageous Zither Heart Realm. Through unceasing effort and comprehension, Ye Yin Zhu—by Zi's side— had cultivated his zither magic past its most important metamorphosis.

“Clear and refreshing autumn weather; calm wind level with the sand. The clouds far away, the geese flies in the horizon, crying. By means of far-reaching ambition, these geese express freedom of mind. This song, << Flock of Geese on

the Shore >>, is good.” Nina’s gaze became infatuated. She seemed to be seeing Ye Yin Zhu’s master rather than Ye Yin Zhu playing on the central training field. It made her long for the old times she’d shared with him...

[C81] ZE Chapter 21.1

Chapter 21 – Eastern Dragon Sect of Painting (I)

Zi closed his eyes, his resolute face displaying a relaxed expression. He didn't bother watching. At this very moment, his two hands clasped over his heart. A layer of light violet crystal was already beginning to form. Ye Yin Zhu's body released a light yellow magic, which quietly invaded his body.

In the Equal Life Contract, if one's strengths fundamentally changed and evolved, the other would also benefit immensely.

"Ah—!" A bloodcurdling screech suddenly rang from the sky, marring the beautiful artistry of << Flock of Geese on the Shore >>.

Nesta had also become completely immersed in << Flock of Geese on the Shore >>, but that sudden intense and heavy sound had woken him up. To his immense horror, he discovered that he and his Red Dragon were no longer flying, instead falling at a steep dive towards the ground.

<< Flock of Geese on the Shore >> was one of the famous nine great songs of the Zither Sect. Its effect: Forbidden Sky.

Unless one were three levels higher than the musician, all creatures with flight capability would inevitably drop from the sky upon hearing this song. With Ye Yin Zhu's current magic rank, Primary Level Cyan Rank, flying creatures of lower abilities fell under the influence of this song. As one of the famed nine great songs of the Zither Sect, << Flock of Geese on the Shore >> required his heart and soul to be in harmony in order to perform it. With Zi by his side, Ye Yin Zhu could now bring out the full might of the song and stay unaffected by its power.

"Zi—save them." << Flock of Geese on the Shore >> hadn't stopped playing, yet Ye Yin Zhu had suddenly raised his head to look up at the falling Nesta in the sky.

Absorbed in the zither song, Zi's brows furrowed slightly, but he still dashed

forward. His right leg abruptly pushed off against the ground, leaving an impression about a meter deep. His body, with the help of the tremendous force he exerted from the ground, flew directly upward, arriving beneath the falling Red Dragon in the blink of an eye. His two hands formed a circular support arrangement just as the Red Dragon fell onto it. Zi let loose a low roar as he propped up the dragon and started pushing it in the opposite direction. A powerful force dispersed its gravitational acceleration. He then flung Nesta and his Red Dragon Degas away.

The Red Dragon's gigantic body rolled as it hit the ground, stopping 10 meters away from Ye Yin Zhu. At this moment, Nesta's heavy armor had already cracked open. If his right hand hadn't held firmly onto his Red Dragon Degas's back scales, then he would have already been thrown away.

Ye Yin Zhu's eight fingers quietly concluded << Flock of Geese on the Shore >>, with its three upward, three downward strum rhythm. His gaze was full of adoration as he looked at Zi, who had returned to his side. His handsome, graceful face held a trace of a heartfelt smile.

Zi nodded to Yin Zhu. "There are a lot of people here; I'll leave first. I'll find you later."

Milky white and violet rays of light shone from their bodies, and Zi once again became an illusionary figure. He merged with Ye Yin Zhu's body, disappearing.

The Blood Soul Spear stabbed into the ground as Nesta gasped heavily for air. "Ye Yin Zhu, you win." After he said that, his gaze become abnormally cold. "But I don't understand why you deceived me; was it in order to catch me off guard?"

"Deceive you? I didn't!" Ye Yin Zhu looked at him, surprised.

Nesta snorted coldly. "I told you to summon your magical beast earlier and you replied that you didn't have one. Who was that just now? Only a rank 9 magical beast or Netherworld Spirit magical beast can take human form."

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, "I really didn't deceive you. Zi isn't my magical beast; he is my friend, my partner."

"Degas is also my partner. Do your words hold any meaning?" Nesta snarled. Originally, Ye Yin Zhu's formidable strength had already gained his respect, but

at this very moment, his opponent's deception had caused him to change his attitude and view of Ye Yin Zhu.

"No, he didn't deceive you. He spoke the truth." A faint violet radiance swirled down. The two of them didn't know when, but President Ferguson had already arrived beside them.

Nesta looked at him and curtly asked, "What?"

Ferguson explained, "His definition of partner is different from yours. Perhaps you view your Red Dragon as your partner, but the two of you are still in a Master-Slave Contract. Ye Yin Zhu and his partner, however, are actually in an Equal Contract. On this point, you cannot rebuke his qualifications of using the word 'partner'. This match is indisputable. Ye Yin Zhu hasn't violated any competition rules, and you have already lost the ability to fight. I declare that today's battle is the Divine Music division's victory."

All of the students of the Martial Arts Department watching the battle were silent. Meanwhile, the side of the Magic Department burst into earth-shattering applause. They knew that this Freshman Competition Championship would belong to the Magic Department once more. Although the other semifinal match had yet to begin, the Summon division's freshmen were exceedingly powerful. By no means would the Martial Arts Department's second ranked Heavy Sword division be capable of defeating them.

Nesta's gaze towards Ye Yin Zhu changed. Naturally, he didn't harbor even the slightest of suspicions about Ferguson's words. He bitterly laughed. "I'm sorry. Maybe because I'm somewhat unwilling to accept my defeat, but I tried to find some reason against it. This is your victory. When I believe I can once again challenge your strength, I will come find you."

Nesta's honesty made Ye Yin Zhu smile. "Alright. I will wait for you. As you said, you will only become more powerful when you continuously challenge those stronger than you. Just a moment ago, I have proven this point."

Nesta looked at Ye Yin Zhu's clear eyes before laughing boisterously. "Good. Not only have we become rivals, we've also become friends as well. I am Nesta, and here's a new friend."

"Good!"

At this moment, Ferguson abruptly interrupted with a serene look, “Ye Yin Zhu, follow me. I need to ask you something.”

The first semifinal match concluded. The Divine Music division, the dark horse of the Freshman Competition, had advanced once more, depending solely on Ye Yin Zhu’s strength. In an unanimously acclaimed and impossible situation, they had violently fought their way to the finals. Instantly, the title of Divine Music mage had become the most popular topic in the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. In addition, Ye Yin Zhu had also become the most talked about person in the institution.

Ye Yin Zhu followed Ferguson, arriving at his residence—the Presidential Pagoda.

“Ye Yin Zhu, tell me why your Red Rank magic suddenly broke through to the Yellow Rank.” Standing in the center of the room, Ferguson stared at the youth with a strange look.

Ye Yin Zhu blanked out before shaking his head and saying, “I cannot say.” Although he was honest, he also knew that this Zither Sect secret absolutely could not be known by outsiders.

Ferguson laughed. “Little boy, you are indeed honest and lovable. You do not know, however, that today’s events have given you a lot of trouble.”

“Trouble? Why?”

Ferguson explained, “All cultivators are bound within the Rainbow Ranking’s restricted regulations. As such, transcending beyond this regulation is considered heresy. I must report this to the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda and allow them to handle it. Today, your magic rank suddenly leapt past the three levels of the Orange Rank. Tell me; should I send you off to the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda?”

“Blue Dias Seven Pagoda? No, I don’t want to go. Grandfather told me that it is a very dangerous place.” Ye Yin Zhu immediately shook his head. He clearly recalled every discussion his two grandfathers had of the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda. His appearance became very unsightly. Although they hadn’t elaborated on what kind of place the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda was, it was unlikely to be a good place.

Ferguson countered, “Many people have witnessed today’s match, however. If you don’t want to go to the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda, then I will need good justification from you in order to resolve this matter. Are you aware of how many mouths I must silence?”

Ye Yin Zhu scratched his head. “I, I also don’t know.”

[C82] ZE Chapter 21.2

Chapter 21 – Eastern Dragon Sect of Painting (II)

Turning his body around to face away from Ye Yin Zhu, Ferguson's eyes displayed a crafty light. As if indifferent, he said, "There is only one option. All in all, you are still a student of the institute. I do not want you to be considered a heretic by the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda. At present, there is only one road you can walk. You must pay your respects to me as your master. This way, I can claim to have previously presented you with magic equipment that concealed your rank, thereby helping you resolve this matter. Do you understand?"

"Eh? Pay my respects to you as my master? But, I already have a master. I'm afraid this is out of the question."

Ferguson said, "Then I'm afraid my hands are tied. I can only deliver you to the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda. Only, did your teacher stipulate that you can only have him as your master?"

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and replied, "This didn't occur, but..."

"Since he didn't, what is there for you to hesitate about? I have studied Spiritual Magic my whole life, yet I still haven't had a single disciple to this day. Rest reassured; I will impart upon you teachings that will in no way clash with what your teacher had taught you. Divine Music Magic is a branch of Spiritual Magic. If your teacher asks you in the future, I can help you resolve the issue."

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu couldn't help but recall what Nina had told him that day and probingly asked, "If I call you teacher, I won't need to call you master, right?"

Ferguson was amused at Ye Yin Zhu's self-deceptive way of speaking. "Yes; it depends on you." He couldn't help but lament in his heart, 'I don't know how many people of royalty and nobility within Milan have sent me a child to accept as a disciple, all of which I rejected. This boy is actually discussing prerequisites.'

"Teacher." Ye Yin Zhu very naively bowed towards Ferguson. His pure

character made him perceive Ferguson as benevolent. Such a benevolence produced amiable feelings without any menace. In addition, Nina had warned him beforehand, which made him no longer hesitant.

“Good. From now on, you are my sole disciple. If my deductions are accurate, you used a Contract Summoning today, and that should be your magical beast partner. Do you know his origins?”

“Magical beast? No, Zi isn’t a magical beast. He is my friend, my dear friend,” Ye Yin Zhu hurriedly explained.

Ferguson’s expression shifted. “So you’re saying that ever since you knew him, he has appeared as a human? When did you roughly meet him?”

Ye Yin Zhu answered, “Ten years ago. At that time, I was six years old and Zi had appeared while I was practicing with my zither. Afterwards, he would come listen to me play every day. He was my sole friend before coming here to Milan. For ten years, we hadn’t ever separated.”

Listening to him, Ferguson couldn’t help but furrow his brows deeply. Ye Yin Zhu’s explanation had already exceeded the scope of his knowledge. “What’s this Equal Contract between you two about? I have previously seen an introduction of an Equal Summon Contract in ancient texts. Instead, this appears to be an Equal Life Contract. Essentially, your lives and souls are tied together as one. Were you aware of this?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded his head. “I know! Zi is my dear friend. He can’t come to college with me, though. Zi said that we can frequently see each other with this contract. Thus, we agreed and signed this contract.”

Ferguson faked a smile and said, “But this contract also prevents you from possessing a magical beast. Furthermore, don’t tell me that you didn’t want to know where that Zi learned this contract from?”

Ye Yin Zhu simply replied, “I trust Zi.”

Looking at Ye Yin Zhu’s resolute and unyielding gaze, Ferguson was silent. This disciple had the kind of character he was naturally satisfied with. He felt, however, that Zi was not simple. No dou qi, no magic, simply relying only on brute force to actually stop a Green Rank Gigantic Dragon cavalryman’s all-out

attack... this kind of power had never before been seen in a human.

The Equal Life Contract of legend was originally a marriage contract. Only when the affection of both husband and wife had become stronger than even blood ties would they give up the power of a magical beast and agree to sign such a contract in order to always be able to see the other person. It was abnormal.

That Zi was in no way human, making it impossible for Ferguson to use his spiritual force to determine the abnormality. Although there was no difference between Zi's outward appearance and a human's, he didn't have a human's aura. If he was a magical beast, then what magical beast possessed such powerful physical strength and the ability to transform into a human form? Contemplating the issues, Ferguson couldn't help but get a headache.

"Well. Yin Zhu, you should go back now. Rest properly in preparation for the final match. I will reflect on this and decide how to impart my Spiritual Magic knowledge to you. Go back and don't forget what I have told you just now. If someone asks, tell him that I'd given you magic equipment that had concealed your genuine strength. As for everything else, I can settle them on your behalf."

"Okay, thank you, teacher." Ye Yin Zhu gratefully bid farewell to Ferguson with the intention of leaving, but Ferguson called out for him to halt.

"Wait a moment. Yin Zhu, I have something I must tell you. Once this Freshman Competition finishes, the college will organize its first real combat drill. It's completely unlike the match styles of the competition. Instead, it is a genuine battlefield. When that moment comes, when every division chooses their most outstanding students to participate, I want you to join. Battle experience often makes a person mature quickly. At that time, the college will inform the individuals of the specific details."

"Okay. I will listen to teacher." Complying with the college's arrangements, Ye Yin Zhu simply assumed there wouldn't be too many questions, including why no suspicions of war on the peaceful mainland have emerged.

Looking at Ye Yin Zhu's departing back, Ferguson allowed his smile to flood his face. Within his heart, he secretly thought, 'He doesn't consider this to be a threat and promise? Such a good disciple; I'm afraid that I can't find a second

one anywhere on the continent. Simple and pure in temperament as well as simple and pure spiritual force and dou qi; in addition, he also gave the Divine Music division a miracle and has an Equal Life Summoning Contract. All of this can only be represented with one word: genius. Not only that, but a flawless genius.'

After watching a few of Ye Yin Zhu's matches, Ferguson had concocted his plan. As the competition continued, Ye Yin Zhu had given him more and more wonderful surprises. He'd hesitated up until today, when Ye Yin Zhu's magic had suddenly broken through to the Yellow Rank. He exploited this good opportunity to semi-force the acceptance of this disciple and vaguely sensed in his heart that not far off into the future, Ye Yin Zhu would inevitably become a nova in the mage circles on this continent.

Ye Yin Zhu had just left Ferguson's residential area before he suddenly came across Sura. Sura seemed to be waiting here for him. Upon seeing him come out, Sura hastily walked up to him and urgently asked, "Yin Zhu, what did the President seek you out for? Was it about you skipping a rank? You're also extremely reckless; how did this issue crop up? Don't you know that this is very dangerous for you? Oh! In the end, was it about how you cultivate?"

Ye Yin Zhu was somewhat flustered by Sura's series of questions. "Sura, speak slowly, and don't worry! It was none of those topics. Just now, teacher helped me think of a good solution."

At that moment, he explained the entirety of his discussion with Ferguson to Sura. In the institution, Ye Yin Zhu only highly trusted two people: Nina and Sura. Apart from secrets pertaining to the Zither Sect or Bamboo Sect, he didn't feel the need to conceal anything from them.

"Not bad, not bad. You've truly scared me to death." Sura patted his chest. "Who was that individual you summoned today? When I was watching Nesta and his dragon charge at you in the sky, I was really frightened. The President also didn't block him. Fortunately, you had a way to deal with it."

[C83] ZE Chapter 21.3

Chapter 21 – Eastern Dragon Sect of Painting (III)

Ye Yin Zhu said, “That was Zi, my friend. I actually don’t know how powerful he is. Since we signed an Equal Contract, I’ve felt that my power has seemingly increased in strength. That’s also why I was able to summon him at that time.”

Sura’s gaze towards Ye Yin Zhu suddenly became a bit strange. “Equal Contract? You went as far as to sign an Equal Life Contract? Yin Zhu, you and that Zi won’t be able to come back from this mountain.¹”

“Come back from this mountain? What mountain?” Ye Yin Zhu looked at Sura with surprise.

Sura unhappily said, “Just forget about it. Don’t listen to my words. Last time, you said that I was the second person you promised to protect; that first person wouldn’t happen to be Zi, right?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and replied, “Yes!”

Sura’s voice trembled slightly. “Don’t tell me that you... you really like him?”

Ye Yin Zhu earnestly said, “I naturally like Zi very much. We have been together for ten years. Since I was six years old, he has accompanied me by my side, listening to me play the zither. We grew up together and even left the Desolate Jade Sea together in order to come here. He was my only friend back then.”

“Is he truly just a friend?” Sura asked with a strained voice.

Ye Yin Zhu nodded his head and said, “Why are you saying ‘just a friend’? We’re certainly friends.”

Sura unhappily answered, “A friend that you signed an Equal Life Contract with; are you insane?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “What does that have to do with anything? I wanted to be able to see him at any time, so we signed the contract. If worst comes to worst, I just

can't have a magical beast."

"You..., Ye Yin Zhu, I find that speaking to you is really like playing a lute to a cow!²" Sura's body shivered once more, only with anger this time.

"Playing the lute to a cow? I have been playing my zither for a long time; could it be that playing the lute to a cow is a new zither cultivation method? Strange! You are part of the Assassin division, so how can you know cultivation methods of our Divine Music division? Hey, Sura, don't leave. Wait— I..."

Sura quickly walked away. Ye Yin Zhu started to follow him, but Sura had already vanished behind the curve of the path back to the institution. Ye Yin Zhu knew he was definitely returning to the dormitory. The amount of stamina the battle had drained from him wasn't small, however, so he simply couldn't chase after Sura. He unhurriedly walked back to the Divine Music division's residential district by himself.

Entering the Magic Department section, he didn't walk very far before he came across an acquaintance. Provoking him on the first day he entered the institution and later losing to him in a match, it was the genius mage of the Wind division— Rolande.

Rolande held a bag of food behind her back, her eyes unexpressive. The last time he had seen her was 10 days ago; Rolande had become plumper by a size. Her good-looking face had already become somewhat circular.

Ye Yin Zhu stared at her and she at him. "It's you." Her voice instantly became chilly, as though she practiced Ice Magic.

"Oh! Hello, Rolande." Ye Yin Zhu warily looked at her. After all, their relationship wasn't friendly at all.

"It looks as though you're very pleased with yourself. I heard you defeated Nesta of the Heavy Cavalry division," Rolande said, already walking up to stand in front of Ye Yin Zhu. Her eyes were shooting flames at him. As she glared at Ye Yin Zhu, her anger rose to its boiling point.

Since she was a child, she had lived a life of luxury. At the same time, thanks to her outstanding gift for magic, she had reached the Yellow Rank realm by the age of 16 and had a Green Dragon by her side. For a long time now, she believed that

she was the most powerful person of the younger generation, even as powerful as her elder brother. After her battle with Ye Yin Zhu however, her confidence had been completely smashed to pieces. For her, it wasn't just a simple loss; it had been a challenge. In the end, the one to lose was her.

This feeling of humiliation... she couldn't bear it. These days, she couldn't move on from the pain and thought of ways to retaliate against Ye Yin Zhu. It was a fair match, however, and that reason along with her pride prevented her from utilizing her clan's influence. This conclusion had possibly made her drown out her grief and indignation with food. The food she ate had only settled her heart temporarily. Even though she was fully aware that she was already beginning to put on weight, she still continued to repeatedly stuff her mouth. Now that she was looking at Ye Yin Zhu, the anger and hate in her heart almost made her lose control of herself.

"Rolande, you seem plump." Ye Yin Zhu didn't know what he should talk to her about. He wanted to return to his dormitory, but Rolande was blocking the road. Thus, he automatically remarked this observation.

"Are you looking at me as a joke? All of this is your fault. If I turn into a huge fatty because I keep eating, then I will ruin you. For the rest of my life, I will torment you until you die," Rolande exclaimed incoherently, on the verge of tears.

"Eh..." Ye Yin Zhu also didn't know how to comfort her. Suddenly, he recalled the story his mother told him when he left the Desolate Jade Sea. "Rolande, a very fat girl is no good."

"I don't need your commentary." In fact, Rolande didn't know how to deal with Ye Yin Zhu. She knew she was unable to match him in a fight, but upon coming across him, she unexpectedly didn't want him to leave.

"Let me tell you a story." Ye Yin Zhu said as he quietly shifted to the side. "Once upon a time, there were two pigs, a male and a female. Every evening, the boar always keep watch on the gilt as he was afraid their master would grab the gilt while they were asleep to slaughter her. Day after day, the gilt increasingly became plumper while the boar became thinner."

"Are you calling me a gilt?" Rolande abruptly became indignant.

“No, no. Let me finish.” Ye Yin Zhu continued, “Then one day, the boar suddenly heard his master meet with the butcher to talk about how much money he could get for selling the healthy gilt to the slaughterhouse. The boar grieved very much. As a result, the boar’s temperament from that day forward changed greatly. Whenever the master delivered food, the boar would always eat all of it. Every day, he would eat well before immediately lying down to sleep. He would then tell the gilt to keep watch instead. If he discovered that she wasn’t keeping watch, then he would ignore her existence.”

Hearing this, Rolande’s expression eased somewhat. She automatically asked, “What happens next?” Because of her violently fluctuating mood, she was somewhat spellbound and hadn’t realized that Ye Yin Zhu had already moved to the side and taken a step forward.

“Gradually the days passed, and the gilt began believing that the boar no longer cared for her. The gilt despaired while the boar nonchalantly lived a peaceful life. Very quickly, a month passed and the master and butcher arrived before a fat boar. He discovered that after a month, the boar had become fat, stout, strong, and glossy while the gilt didn’t have much meat left. At that moment the boar ran with all his might to grab the master’s attention. He wanted to make it known that he was the healthy pig. In the end, the butcher took the boar...

“...and dragged it outside the pen. At that final moment, the boar smiled and said to the gilt, ‘In the future, don’t eat so much.’ The gilt grieved, heartbroken. She tried her hardest to escape, but the master had already closed the pen’s gate...

“Pressed against the fence, the gilt watched the boar die, shedding glistening tears. That evening, the gilt watched on as the master’s family happily ate pork. The gilt, heartbroken, lay down in the area the boar had previously slept in. She realized that there was a row of words carved into the wall: ‘If I cannot convey my love to you with these words, then I will use my life as proof!’ The gilt was once more broken hearted upon seeing these words. Everyone who hears this poignant tale is emotionally moved without exception. Girls remember this romance in the future and begin to lose weight...”

Rolande continued to stand there, but she was already lifeless. Gradually, her

lifeless eyes reddened, two teardrops quietly rolling down her cheek. “Such a good, pitiful boar! Must lose weight, must lose weight...” The bag of food slowly slipped out of her hand. She suddenly discovered her appetite seemed to have already disappeared.

“Yi, Ye Yin Zhu? Ye Yin Zhu, you...” She abruptly turned around, only to see Ye Yin Zhu’s figure reaching the end of the road and disappear. Upon seeing his behavior, Rolande seemed to be somewhat confused.

1. (Essentially, they can’t take back their actions; this choice is final; they screwed themselves over with this huge roadblock they’ve given themselves; etc.)
2. (AKA preaching to deaf ears)

[C84] ZE Chapter 21.4

Chapter 21 – Eastern Dragon Sect of Painting (IV)

Pfft. Giggling, Rolande's grief turned into happiness. "I was so terrifying that he actually sprinted away. Only—that story was really moving! He's advising me to lose weight? Or did I just really bother him? Hn, I want to be beautiful." Saying this, the smile on her face couldn't help but increase in intensity. The grudges she held against Ye Yin Zhu in her heart quietly disappeared. Resembling a mature woman, her original mood easily showed changes. As she left regretfully, she realized that Ye Yin Zhu no longer seemed irritating.

In fact, when Mei Ying had told this tale to Ye Yin Zhu, she'd told him at the end that if he happened to come across a girl he wanted to live for, he should bring her back home.



The highly anticipated second semifinal match was held in the afternoon. The Summon division didn't have any trouble prevailing over the Heavy Sword division, thus advancing towards the finals with the Divine Music division. The next day would be spent renovating the training field. The day after that, the final battle will be underway.

Ye Yin Zhu was now a little depressed, possibly because he was embarrassed and at a complete loss about the conversation earlier. When he returned to his dormitory, he'd discovered that the dormitory was already bustling with noise and excitement at an unprecedented level. The beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division in the same academic year as him, along with Hai Yang and Xiang Luan, were here. These ten girls giggled and chatted as they waited for him.

Upon seeing Ye Yin Zhu's return, all of the girls surrounded him at the same time.

"Wow! Yin Zhu, you were really awesome today! You got rid of that gorilla; so, you're very powerful. It would be better if I'm your girlfriend." An excited girl

whose name Ye Yin Zhu didn't know threw herself at him,

"I disagree! That's out of the question; Ye Yin Zhu is everyone's property. How can you alone benefit? Don't forget; he is the sole blade of grass among ten thousand flowers of our Divine Music division. As the first young, cute boy of our Divine Music division, you can't monopolize him."

"En, this makes sense. How about we each get him for one day?"

"Not bad; that's a good plan."

"Eh..., fellow students, what are you doing?" Ye Yin Zhu finally found the chance for him to interrupt. At this moment, his face had already flushed bright red because of the crowd of girls encircling him. Although a number of fragrant scents surrounded him, he didn't enjoy it very much. He much preferred when it was only him and Sura.

Xiang Luan and Hai Yang stood to the side, smiling, as their delicate bodies lightly trembled. They didn't know why, but they thought Ye Yin Zhu's embarrassed manner seemed very adorable.

"Yin Zhu, pretend to faint. Quickly!" A quiet voice echoed in Ye Yin Zhu's ear. It may have been because of this highly forceful and challenging situation that Ye Yin Zhu's reaction was near instantaneous. His eyes closed shut, and his body immediately collapsed to the floor, causing cries of alarm to ring out.

Sura appeared out of nowhere and grabbed Ye Yin Zhu. He frowned and said, "Leave. You're too noisy, and Yin Zhu had just finished a battle. Allow him to rest, okay?"

The dormitory calmed at last. Sura's strong suggestion made each and every one of the Divine Music division's beautiful ladies leave.

Xiang Luan and Hai Yang were the last to depart. As they passed by Ye Yin Zhu, Xiang Luan looked down and softly whispered into Ye Yin Zhu's ear, "Your acting is very clumsy. I promise I won't forget my commitment and will seek an opportunity to fulfill it." Finished speaking, her stunning, delicate face flushed red as she tugged at Hai Yang to leave quickly.

The sound of the door closing echoed. Ye Yin Zhu immediately bounced out of Sura's embrace, taking in huge mouthfuls of air. He faked a smile and said, "Sura,

what I experienced earlier when surrounded by them seemed more exhausting than my battle with Nesta. Luckily, you caught my attention. Otherwise, I don't know how long they would've stayed."

Sura groaned and said, "If you aren't cautious, then being surrounded by those excited beauties will only anger the other males."

Looking at the closed dormitory door, Ye Yin Zhu thought he felt his ear itch. Xiang Luan had left behind a faint fragrance that made his heart speed up yet again. A promise, what had she promised? Was it to dance the << Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers >>? The anticipation in his heart quietly rose. Grimacing at Sura, he hastily returned to his room to rest.



In order to be at his best during the finals, Ye Yin Zhu didn't go to work at the Floating Orchid Pavilion the next day, meaning Sura went and requested a vacation day for him. Alone, Ye Yin Zhu cultivated at home.

Courageous Zither Heart; after cultivating for 16 years, he had at last broken through to the Courageous Zither Heart Realm. Imperceptibly, his attitude matured somewhat. So much so that while playing the zither, his musical aura had also experienced great changes. His previous zither music could be said to be soft and gentle, brimming with an innocent harmony. His zither music had now become peaceful, pure, and honest—resembling aged wine with its faint and unceasingly pleasant lingering effect.

Qin Shang once told him that when he entered the Courageous Zither Heart Realm, he would also enter a phase of rapid zither magic improvement. This increased speed was even quicker than his practice with the Pure Zither Heart. That kind of situation would continue until he reached the bottleneck of the Courageous Heart, stopping at its peak.

Zither magic cultivation in the Zither Sect was distinctly different from a typical Divine Music mage's cultivation, one difference being that its cultivation speed was clearly quicker. An ordinary person practicing zither magic from childhood would require approximately 10 to 15 years to complete the nine levels of the first realm for zither magic cultivation. Later, upon entering the Courageous Zither Heart Realm, their cultivation speed would significantly decrease. Qin

Shang took 50 years to break through the bottleneck of the Courageous Zither Heart Realm and enter the Profound Violet Zither Heart Realm.

Ye Yin Zhu's circumstances were different. He was the first in Zither Sect history to successfully cultivate a Pure Zither Heart. This Pure Zither Heart was the most challenging Zither Sect introduction to cultivation method. Its requirement for each aspect was incredibly high. But while the Pure Zither Heart was challenging, it also led to a stronger foundation.

To an ordinary person, it was near impossible to imagine maintaining such a selfless heart for 16 years. Ye Yin Zhu's genius and natural eight fingers allowed his zither music to possess an inherent spiritual comprehension. This talent had allowed him to make a successful breakthrough within 16 years time. In any case, that Pure Zither Heart cultivation was a success. But to break through to the Profound Violet Zither Heart Realm, Ye Yin Zhu must cultivate and step onto a long road. He could clearly sense that his zither magic had slightly improved with each zither song he played. Previously, this would've been impossible to imagine. The advantages of the Pure Zither Heart have at last begun to slowly emerge.

A day of just zither practice was but another regular day for Ye Yin Zhu. When the day of the finals arrived, he had completely recovered. Even Ferguson didn't know that his new disciple had already reached the Green Rank or higher in both magic and martial arts.

The magnanimous and exceedingly talented Summon division emerged as the Divine Music division's opponent in the final match.

Both parties of five arrived at the central training field. An individual in the middle of the Summon division's team appeared to be a first year, a 17 to 18-year-old youth. With a delicate and pretty appearance, his two eyes appeared extremely clever. He did not have the aloof and remote aura seen in other mages.

"Hello, I am the general of the Summon division, Ma Liang. First year." Very amiable, he extended his right hand out.

Ye Yin Zhu reached out to grasp the hand. This time, he unexpectedly felt something against his palm. He looked with astonishment at Ma Liang. Ma Liang

was also thinking deeply as he stared back before nodding.

“Divine Music division general, Ye Yin Zhu—first year.” Ye Yin Zhu automatically released the other’s hand, but Ma Liang stopped him long enough to close Yin Zhu’s fingers around an object. It appeared to be a slip of paper.

Ma Liang smiled slightly and said, “The students of our Magic Department have talked it over, and we agreed that we do not wish for the noble, beautiful ladies of your division to be hurt. It would be better if the finals today became a match between the both of us as representatives of our divisions. One battle to determine victory or defeat, how about it?”

Ye Yin Zhu stared at his counterpart blankly. This type of choice was clearly a great convenience for Yin Zhu’s side. Apart from him and the rest of Divine Music division members, only Hai Yang had the strength to fight. From the calm gazes of the other sides’ five members in the face of their performance, Yin Zhu determined that they were all at least Yellow Rank Advanced Mages. When he looked at Ma Liang, he felt this man was no less of a threat than Nesta.

“Wouldn’t this be too disadvantageous for you? It would be better to use wolfpack style.” Ye Yin Zhu didn’t desire a handicap from the other side.

Ma Liang shook his head and said, “No. You are confident, but I am equally as confident.” As he spoke, he abruptly took a step forward so only Ye Yin Zhu could hear him. He whispered softly, “As a matter of fact, this Freshman Competition is not just a contest between our divisions. At the same time, it is also one between our Zither Sect and Painting Sect, no?”

Ye Yin Zhu’s heart jolted. Painting Sect? The Eastern Dragon Sect of Painting?

Chapter 22 – Battle Painting (I)

Ye Yin Zhu’s heart jolted. Painting Sect? The Eastern Dragon Sect of Painting?

With regards to the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects, Qin Shang hadn’t spoken a lot about them with Ye Yin Zhu, but he had once told him that the Eight Eastern Dragon sects were divided into two branches, magic and martial arts. The four magic sects were the Zither, Chess, Calligraphy, and Painting sects. The four martial arts sects were the Plum, Orchid, Bamboo and Chrysanthemum sects.

The Zither Sect was ranked first among the four magic sects, while the Painting Sect respectfully followed right behind it. Although this ranking wasn’t at all representative of the four sects’ absolute strengths, to a certain degree, it represented their relative strength among the others of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects.

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t ask because he knew that this wasn’t the time to ask questions. He couldn’t refuse though, so he nodded. “Fine then.”

Students of both sides gradually withdrew, and the rallying cheers of the students of the Magic Department increased in volume. This year’s final battle of the Freshman Competition had finally begun.

Ma Liang wore the standard Summon division’s gray magic robe, with its expansive sleeves. Although he wasn’t very handsome and also slightly shorter than Ye Yin Zhu, he still exuded an optimistic air, easily allowing him to obtain favorable impressions.

Ye Yin Zhu extracted his Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance while Ma Liang also withdrew several items. A very peculiar magical staff appeared in his hands. The staff was approximately two-thirds of a meter tall, glinting with a faint red radiance. Adorning the tip of the staff was a white gem cut in the shape of a large teardrop with its tip pointing outwards—an excessive seven and a half centimeters in length. To ordinary people, this was only a peculiar magical staff, but Ye Yin Zhu knew that this was a painting brush of the Painting Sect.

The Zither, Chess, Calligraphy, and Painting Sects were the four magic disciplines. The Zither Sect was classified as a Divine Music discipline, a branch of

the Spiritual discipline. The Chess Sect was classified as a Domain Seal discipline, a branch of the Spatial Domain discipline. The Calligraphy Sect was similar to each of the elemental disciplines, and was the only sect among the four magic sects to cultivate Synthesis Magic. The Painting Sect, however, cultivated Summon Magic.

Ye Yin Zhu had heard from Qin Shang that the four sects were not as simple as they were presented, but this was the first time he had genuinely encountered such a matter.

Ma Liang smiled slightly and said, “Elder Brother Ye, I have seen your previous matches. Your one battle with Nesta was the only time I could confirm my judgement. I know your strength is very powerful. Today, let us have a fair battle.” Violating the Rainbow Ranking System’s evolution of strength was symbolic of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects.

Finished speaking, Ma Liang’s hand held the magical staff in the hollow of his palm and lightly traced a circle. His gentle expression also became grave. Right hand flickering rapidly, his mouth seemed to be moving, reciting an incantation. An arc of yellow light appeared from the tip of his magical staff, gradually drawing a design in the sky.

It seemed to others that Ma Liang was drawing an exclusive Summon Magic spell while reciting the incantation. Only Ye Yin Zhu knew that his mouth’s movement was merely a ruse to fool people. Removing their extremely unusual circumstances, each of the four magic sects of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects used magic that did not require the assistance of incantations. At this moment, the painting brush in Ma Liang’s hand was his true weapon.

Ma Liang’s motions were fluid and swift, the movements of the magical staff were like the drifting clouds and the flowing water. In merely a few seconds, a drawing of a wolf was completed, and a fantastic scene appeared. When he finished drawing, rays of light unexpectedly extended out in a flash. Fusing together in the sky, the rays of light condensed in the blink of an eye.

“Ao——!” The wolf howled. The large cyan wolf’s length surpassed three meters, the design coming to life and pouncing straight at Ye Yin Zhu.

Sitting in the rostrum, Ferguson couldn’t help but be astonished as he watched

this scene. “Such a strange summon spell! I have never seen anything like it. Ah! Youngsters nowadays are indeed startling.” Summon Magic was the strangest discipline, but also the most extraordinary magic. Apart from the ranks assigned in accordance to the Rainbow Ranking System, their circumstances compared with other magic disciplines were different. The summons of Summon mages were different from those of magical beasts. Fantastical oddities of every description could be found within summoning. This was also why Ma Liang wasn’t worried about his Painting Sect affiliation being identified.

The three meter long cyan wolf was only a Wind Wolf, a rank 3 common magical beast. Although Ma Liang was Yellow Rank, Ye Yin Zhu was familiar with the ranking system of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects and knew that this Ma Liang was at least a Primary Level Green Rank, like himself. He just didn’t know what the second stage of the Painting Sect cultivation was.

With Ma Liang’s current magic ranking, he could certainly summon rank 4 to 5 magical beasts. Nevertheless, if the amount of magical beasts reached a certain quantity, Ma Liang would have a very difficult time controlling them. He hadn’t forgotten how troublesome it was to control those two Gigantic Dragons he had summoned during the previous two matches.

Despite his thoughts, Ye Yin Zhu had already welcomed that charging wolf. His left hand hugged the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance to his chest while his right hand extended forward, already throwing his Jade Silk out quietly. Yellow rays of Dou Qi light transformed into a dark green ring of light in the air, directly confronting the Wind Wolf.

The Wind Wolf’s speed was very quick. During the time when he’d begun pouncing towards Ye Yin Zhu, wind blades were already shooting out of its mouth with lightning speed. Although the wind blades were merely Orange Ranked, the Wind Wolf was an exclusively Wind Attribute magical beast. This allowed it to instantly shoot out Orange Ranked wind blades. Unfortunately, it was currently confronting Ye Yin Zhu.

Level 2 Yellow Rank Bamboo Dou Qi was equivalent to Intermediate Level Green Rank. The Wind Wolf stood no chance. Every wind blade that ran into the Jade Silk instantly twisted and shattered, dissipating back into ordinary air. The Jade Silk then precisely enveloped the Wind Wolf’s head. Instantly, Ye Yin Zhu

shot past the Wind Wolf, dashing towards Ma Liang.

The Wind Wolf froze, motionless. When Ye Yin Zhu sprang past it, its large body had already turned into specks of light, disappearing from sight.

A summon mages' summoned magical beasts were a form of elemental energy condensation. This was a unique aspect of Summon Magic. If a magical beast died, it would simply deconstruct back into its original elemental shape and disappear. As a result, the two most important requirements for Summon Mages were the skillful use of summon spells and formidable magic power. Stronger magic could be obtained by means of elemental alchemical summoning, allowing for the creation of even more powerful magical beasts.

Ma Liang didn't expect Ye Yin Zhu to deal with the Wind Wolf so quickly. He rapidly brandished his painting brush, but at this moment, his second drawing's magic had yet to finish.

Although Ye Yin Zhu's speed was incomparable to Sura's, he was relying on his equivalent Green Rank Dou Qi—which made him significantly more powerful than a regular mage—to instantly arrive in front of Ma Liang. His right hand raised the Jade Silk, which had transformed back into a slender dark green radiance. It directly advanced towards Ma Liang, striking his right hand that still held his painting brush.

At this moment, Ma Liang's face suddenly displayed a strange smile. The Jade Silk was indeed pressed against his wrist, but Ye Yin Zhu sensed that his Jade Silk unexpectedly struck thin air. As he stood in front of Ma Liang, the illusion gradually disappeared.

"Elder Brother Ye, I'm sorry for inconveniencing you. Just now, I had prepared a Substitute Magical Beast." Ma Liang's voice rang out from behind him. When Ye Yin Zhu turned around, he discovered that Ma Liang was already on the other side of the field, five hundred meters away. His painting brush still flickered rapidly as well. This second Summon Magic drawing was clearly more complicated than the previous one.

A showdown between the Zither and Painting Sects? Ye Yin Zhu suddenly recalled what Ma Liang had said before the match. Taking a deep breath, he didn't pursue and attack, instead sitting down as he faced Ma Liang. Since this was a confrontation between the Zither and Painting Sects, he wouldn't use the martial arts of the Bamboo Sect.

The Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance rested atop his legs. Ye Yin Zhu's hands lightly strummed the strings, a series of sonic booms echoing forth at the same time. A five hundred meter distance. To an ordinary Divine Music mage, it would have been very difficult for their formidable power to transverse across this spacious and empty field and into their opponent's ear. For this kind of situation, Ye Yin Zhu embedded dou qi within the plucked zither notes, so that issue simply didn't exist for him.

Sonic booms rang out one after another, like seven thunderclaps, and echoed within Ma Liang's ear. His complexion immediately changed, his hand speed slowing down abruptly. Because Ye Yin Zhu had previously made a mistake, however, Ma Liang's second drawing had already been completed.

A furious roar reverberated out as a huge body suddenly obstructed Ye Yin Zhu's line of sight. Its physique, brimming with power, held a valiant aura. Thick scales and a large crystal horn on its head gave Ye Yin Zhu the clues to identify what it was. A Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon. It was exactly identical in detail to Austin's Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon.

The Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon Ma Liang summoned was clearly smaller than Austin's by a large margin. This was not a Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon King, but even so, this Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon was still a peak rank 5 magical beast. Its huge body violently sped towards Ye Yin Zhu with astonishing speed, not hindered in the slightest by its prominent weight.

With deep red eyes and a near berserk aura, these features highlighted a Tyrant Dragon's inherent nature. Sunlight shone down on the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon, making its scales glitter and shine. At the very least, superficially the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon appeared more ferocious than Nesta's Red Dragon.

After summoning forth a Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon, Ma Liang's complexion waned; summoning a peak rank 5 magical beast had consumed an enormous amount of his magic. He was very confident in this Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon, however, as it wasn't just a solid meat shield; it also held a formidably powerful and ferocious offense. He was convinced that even if Ye Yin Zhu were to summon that violet haired male from the other day, he still would take a while to destroy the Tyrant Dragon. Taking advantage of this opportunity, he sat back down on the ground, closing his eyes. His hand placed the magical painting brush over his legs as he began meditating, trying his utmost to restore his magic power.

Eight fingers vibrated simultaneously, a graceful melody torrentially pouring out. Gentle yet lively, the rhythm completely cleared the heart and mind of worry. Within this gentle and pleasant song, << Green Water >>, sparkling, translucent yellow blades of light elegantly emerged from the strings of the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance Zither.

These sound blades didn't appear the slightest bit domineering, instead looking like faint, flickering rays of light that rose up to the sky during Ye Yin Zhu's performance. Their goal was the rapidly approaching Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon.

The Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's body was enormous, spanning over eight meters in length even though it wasn't a Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon King. This kind of huge build—Ye Yin Zhu basically couldn't dodge it. The Courageous Zither Heart Realm-issued sound blades accurately struck at its thick armor. A shocking scene emerged. The sound blades unexpectedly seemed solid, striking into the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's body and causing trails of sparks to emerge.

"Ao—!" The Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon roared once more. Unlike the first roar, this one held a lot of pain behind it. On its thick scales, the sound blades left behind a mess of scratches. Although unable to slice through its defense, the damage from the numerous sound blades accumulated and slowed down the momentum of the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's rush.

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu's heart was completely immersed within the zither. Everything was as carefree as moving clouds and flowing water. For a long time now, his inability to perfectly harmonize his sound blades with the music had perplexed him. After entering the Courageous Zither Heart Realm, however, this

issue was easily resolved. Even the simplest note could be mixed with a destructive sound blade.

Sound blades and wind blades were not the same. Wind blades shot out rapidly with a sharpness that could naturally wound the opponent. The sound blades, on the other hand, struck the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon for a split second, causing it to violently tremble. Sound blades relied on the note's high frequency and vibration to mimic a saw blade to cut through the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's thick scales. Its destructive capability was incomparable to wind blades.

For each step the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon took, at least 10 sound blades would slice into it. Under Ye Yin Zhu's precise control, all of these sound blades struck at its chest, unceasingly attacking, causing the cracks on the scales to become increasingly larger. The somewhat fine scales began shattering into pieces, carried away by the wind. Because of this sound blade assault, the dragon's pain steadily increased in magnitude.

As the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon neared Ye Yin Zhu, the sound blade barrage became increasingly concentrated. The natural and fluid << Green Water >> song played out from the strings of his strumming hands. Fourteen sound blades simultaneously broke the silence, striking at the airborne Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon.

At this moment, the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's red eyes suddenly changed to gold. A golden sphere of metal attribute power suddenly rushed forth from the tip of its crystal horn, releasing a dazzlingly beautiful golden beam of light. This speck of golden light violently shot out, simultaneously striking all of the 14 flying sound blades. A clash of metal resounded out as the sound blades and light beam shattering to pieces at the same time.

Metal magic was a kind of sub-magic, a branch of elemental magic. Internally, it could increase one's defense. Externally, it could launch a strong attack, such as metal spears. This was a Golden Tyrant Dragon's innate magic.

Perhaps because of the high damage it accumulated from the sound blades, the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's dash stopped, and its crystal horn and the tip of its huge dragon tail unceasingly attacked Ye Yin Zhu with metal magic.

A faint smile appeared on Ye Yin Zhu's face. In the event that the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon insisted on rushing over, the formidable power within the << Green Water >> song wouldn't have been able to rush forth, and Ye Yin Zhu would have had to rely on his close combat skills to block his opponent's frenzied attacks. The moment the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon used magic to attack Ye Yin Zhu—it already had no chance.

According to the Rainbow Ranking system's partitions, a peak rank 5 Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon had strength equivalent to a human Primary Level Cyan Rank, three levels higher than Ye Yin Zhu. As a result, Ye Yin Zhu's sound blades were unable to completely block the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's berserk metal bombardment. The speed at which he launched out the sound blades, however, exceeded the speed of his opponent. A sound blade would cut through and reduce the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's metal magic to a fraction of its strength. By the time it reached Ye Yin Zhu, it couldn't possibly overcome the Divine Celestial Protection's defense.

Just at that moment, Ma Liang abruptly opened his eyes, sensing trouble deep in his heart. These sound blades he witnessed didn't seem to be of the Zither Sect; they were entirely an innovation of Ye Yin Zhu. He thoroughly understood the genuine strength within the Zither Sect's songs, however. At this moment, the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon slowly ceased attacking. It was very difficult for him to determine what kind of change Ye Yin Zhu's zither song could make in the match. Ma Liang's eyes displayed a trace of momentary hesitation before he took a deep breath and lifted his left hand. A sparkling, clear crystal bottle appeared in the palm of his hand. Within the crystal bottle was a bright scarlet liquid.

The Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon's attack speed had become increasingly slower. Ye Yin Zhu had also bizarrely reduced the speed of his sound blade attack as well. The rashness within the Tyrant Dragon's eyes gradually became gentle. When Ye Yin Zhu used the Precious Goose Holding Reeds in its Mouth gesture to create a pleasant string of melodies, it unexpectedly stopped attacking Ye Yin Zhu completely.

Smiling faintly, Ye Yin Zhu said to the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon, "You are tired, go rest."

The well-known, well-documented fiery tempered Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon unexpectedly nodded its humongous head and turned to walk over to the side of the battlefield. Its huge body transformed into a speck of gold light as it quietly faded away.

Chapter 22 – Battle Painting (III)

Although << Green Water >> wasn't one of the famed nine great songs of the Zither Sect, it held a peaceful and tranquil air that dispelled all negative energy. Once it was a third of the way completed, << Green Water >> allowed Ye Yin Zhu to not only pacify the attacking Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon, but also sever its summoning connection with Ma Liang. Without a connection to its master, the element-constructed summoned beast naturally couldn't exist.

Watching this scene from a distance, Ma Liang couldn't help but gasp in admiration. "Ye Yin Zhu, you really are quite powerful. It seems that I can hold nothing back in this battle." His eyes gazed deeply at Ye Yin Zhu, the both of them understanding the other's heart. This confrontation was not as simple as just being a Freshman Competition. Since they also represent their magic branches, this was also an internal competition of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects.

The pacifying aura of << Green Water >> originally had little effect on Ma Liang. Ye Yin Zhu had primarily used it to control the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon, defeating the peak rank 5 magical beast in record time. Therefore, apart from his emptied magic reserves due to summoning such a magical beast, Ma Liang hadn't accrued any sort of damage.

<< Green Water >>'s pleasant lingering effect withdrew as Ye Yin Zhu's hands calmed the strings. Ye Yin Zhu smiled. "Your guidance please."

The current generation Zither Sect and Painting Sect's stars were currently examining one another on the central training field of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. At this very moment, their battle had truly begun.

Ma Liang extended his left hand. The simple silver ring on this middle finger immediately shone with a silver radiance as he traced a circle in the air. A five component item tumbled into the air, each component releasing a silver light. The large components floated in front of Ma Liang. The atmosphere grew heavier as a strange feeling settled in the hearts of the audience. Without warning, a tremendous elemental aura crazily rushed towards those five component items.

The five component item set was soon recognizable as a silver horn, a series of large teeth from an unknown lifeform, a silver sphere of light, a huge silver eyeball, and a large rhombus-shaped scale.

In the rostrum, almost all the deans of the Magic Department stood up at the same time— even the Summon division Dean was no exception. Their eyes all held shock. Ferguson, his back ramrod straight from surprise, exclaimed, “This time, I fear Yin Zhu will lose. That Five Components of the Silver Dragon is unexpectedly a divine Five Components of the Silver Dragon equipment. A Summon mage can only dream of this kind of auxiliary Summon Magic equipment.”

“No, that’s not a Five Components of the Silver Dragon set—it’s Six Components of the Silver Dragon! Apart from the Silver Dragon horn, teeth, heart, eye, and scale, a bottle of red liquid is held in his hands. I’m afraid it’s Silver Dragon blood. I don’t know how this loathsome boy unexpectedly obtained this kind of magical item.” The Summon division Dean’s eyes were aflame with desire. To a Summon mage, no other item could match the appeal of this kind of top-notch auxiliary Summon set.

The air was thick, and Ye Yin Zhu’s complexion grew grave as he examined the Five Components of the Silver Dragon floating in front of Ma Liang. A tremendous and oppressive force assaulted him head on. He knew that he absolutely couldn’t withstand this with just his magical equipment. This powerful elemental magic aura was comparable to Violet Ranked magic. Just moving his body had become difficult under this massive pressure, nevermind trying to play a zither song.

Ma Liang’s eyes flickered as his confidence grew. “Ye Yin Zhu, concede. Although I’m relying on magic items to defeat you, causing me to feel somewhat

ashamed, I do not like to lose.

“These five items in front of me are the organs of a Silver Dragon. In my hand is a vial of Silver Dragon blood. Together, these are called the Six Components of the Silver Dragon. A Silver Dragon was once called a magic dragon. Amongst all Gigantic Dragons, its body’s physical capability is the weakest. At the same time, its magical might is the strongest, surpassed only by a Divine Gigantic Dragon. It has the strength of a peak rank 9 magical beast. Using the Six Components of the Silver Dragon, I can use up all of my magic reserves to summon a Silver Dragon to unleash a single attack. Naturally, it’s impossible for you to withstand it. I don’t want to harm you. Therefore...”

“I’m continuing.” Ye Yin Zhu suddenly interrupted Ma Liang. “Grandfather taught me that on the battlefield, no matter what enemy I face, I cannot cower. Even if it’s a powerful enemy, he can still make a mistake.” His heart was very tranquil, his eyes and movements still clear and graceful. Even under the tremendous pressure produced by the Six Components of the Silver Dragon, he could still steadily sit upright. In the rostrum, the teachers also couldn’t help sitting up and taking notice. Ferguson, even more satisfied, repeatedly nodded. Nevertheless, he already had the intention to intervene in the match.

Ma Liang helplessly said, “Do you really want to continue? If you are unable to withstand the Silver Dragon’s attacks and open your mouth to concede, even if it is difficult, I think I can still withdraw the magic.” Withdrawing released magic would inflict the mage with an extremely powerful backlash, especially when one was using magic that exceeded their rank.

While Ma Liang didn’t want to injure Ye Yin Zhu, he still thirsted for victory. To him, this was an unconditionally and exceptionally good opportunity for the Painting Sect to surpass the Zither Sect. As a result, he preferred to risk his life with the magical backlash in order to win the final battle.

Slowly lifting his painting brush, he opened the vial of Silver Dragon blood. The magical elements in the atmosphere started to crazily rush towards him, seeming to froth as it did so. At this moment, the Five Components of the Silver Dragon in front of him shone with a silver radiance, forming a ring of light that absorbed the approaching elemental power.

Ma Liang lightly dipped the painting brush into the Silver Dragon blood. Seemingly afraid of wasting even a single drop, he rapidly sealed the bottle once more. He flicked his wrist and began sketching out a blood red drawing.

Faint silver rays of light gradually grew richer. The silver ring of light began to expand, the intangibly majestic and tremendous pressure causing the air to seemingly solidify. A distinctive magical pressure of a Silver Dragon drew all of the magical elements within the central training field away from Ye Yin Zhu, converging at the center of the Six Components of the Silver Dragon. Using the Six Components of the Silver Dragon and taking advantage of its colossal magic, Ma Liang intended to use the Silver Dragon's aura within it, a type of magic other mages were incapable of using. This was also largely why it could match a divine item.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't move, icily staring at Ma Liang who slowly painting that Silver Dragon design. No longer able to feel the magical elements in the air with his spiritual force, he was unable to even bring out the qualities of zither magic. He didn't use dou qi to attack as he knew that his Bamboo Dou Qi would be unable to surmount the silver ring of light around Ma Liang. He realized, however, that the internal warmth he had felt during the battle with Nesta was bubbling up once more. The tremendous pressure from the outside seemed to stoke this warmth until it burned even more fiercely.

His soul connection suddenly fluctuated slightly as Zi became suspicious. Clearly, Zi could feel Ye Yin Zhu's crisis from far away. He was currently attempting to communicate with him, wanting to be summoned into the world so that the both of them could resist this powerful enemy together.

This time, however, Ye Yin Zhu didn't summon Zi because he clearly felt that this Six Components of the Silver Dragon's auxiliary Summon Magic was something even Zi couldn't ward off. He absolutely didn't want Zi to be even slightly harmed. Therefore, he steadied his mind and subtly told Zi through their soul connection that he wasn't in trouble.

Silver rays of light became increasingly rich and powerful. A dense energy began to spiral above Ma Liang's head. At this moment, every single stroke he drew caused his complexion to grow paler. It seemed like it was an extremely strenuous effort; large drops of perspiration trailed down his forehead and from

his chin, falling onto his magic robe.

Chapter 22 – Battle Painting (IV)

The previous summon of the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon had already used up a portion of Ma Liang's magic reserves. Right now, although he also had the Six Components of the Silver Dragon in hand to assist him, this summon magic would use up an incredibly large amount of magic reserves. If not for the inherent linkages within the Silver Dragon's blood, his magic reserves would have been sucked out of his body, turning it into a dried-up corpse.

In the rostrum, Nina suddenly smiled and called out to the Dean of the Summon division at the side, "Vieri, how about we make a wager?"

Vieri's gaze at this moment was completely and firmly entranced by that Six Components of the Silver Dragon. He didn't bother turning his head around as he asked, "What's the wager?"

Nina's smile widened, "Let's wager on the victor of this match."

Vieri turned his head towards her in shock. "What? You think this match is still up in the air? Do you not see your Divine Music division student suppressed, unable to continue performing? Don't tell me—you think he can still win?"

Nina nodded very seriously. "Yes! I believe he can win. Moreover, I am certain he will win."

Vieri snorted disdainfully. "Dean Nina, you shouldn't daydream."

Nina smiled. "If you are so confident, why don't we make a bet? If Yin Zhu wins, I want your Summon division's Eternal Substitute Puppet."

Vieri turned pale with fright, "You, how do you know about our Summon division's Eternal Substitute Puppet?" Falling silent too late, he realized his slip. He didn't want to reveal anything, but it was too late.

Nina smirked. "So do you dare to gamble?"

Vieri took a look at the gradually forming Silver Dragon on the training field. His face exuded confidence once more as he faced Nina. The other deans watched the play with amusement. Clenching his teeth, Vieri said, “And if you lose? What will my reward be?”

Nina calmly answered, “If I lose, you can choose any three items from the Divine Music division’s Treasure Trove.”

When these words were breathed, everyone nearby immediately cried out in alarm. The Divine Music division was the richest division; this was naturally related to Nina. Even if the Divine Music division’s Treasure Trove didn’t contain any divine equipment, the collective value of any three items was unlikely to be inferior to a single divine equipment.

Vieri didn’t believe that there was still a possibility for Ye Yin Zhu to bring about a change in his fortunes at this stage of the match. He rolled his eyes. “Good, I accept your wager. President, I ask you to bear witness to our agreement.”

Ferguson looked at the tranquil Nina with amazement. Although he didn’t know why Nina still held such certainty at this moment, he nodded nonetheless. His right hand slashed through the air slightly, as he exclaimed in a low voice, “Praise Blue Dias.” The magic necessary to officiate this simple agreement was already completed.

At last, Ma Liang finished his difficult drawing. In a split second, the Five Components of the Silver Dragon soared into the air, the blood red design magnifying innumerable times. At the same time, the Five Components of the Silver Dragon released an incomparable, dazzling brilliance. The Silver Dragon scales expanded in a flash, the Silver Dragon teeth arranged neatly into place, the Silver Dragon heart entered the center of the drawing, and the Silver Dragon horn stood proud at the top of the drawing. The Silver Dragon eyes slotted into place and brimmed with intelligence as it released a sudden ice-cold luster. It soared into the sky above the central training field.

This was the first time Ye Yin Zhu had seen a rank 9 magical beast. The Silver Dragon’s body was unimaginably huge, its height beyond 10 meters. It was significantly taller than the Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon. The scales didn’t

resemble the thickness of a Golden Crystal Tyrant Dragon, however, as it appeared to sparkle, dazzling in its beauty. The Silver Dragon's eyes were completely silver in color and flickered with a glittering, beautiful design. The four claws pressed against its abdomen were slightly retracted as a silver sphere of light seemingly formed into a small elemental magic vortex. The Gigantic Dragon's wings expanded outward, as if it wished to cover up the sky.

The Silver Dragon spiraled further into the sky, its intangible prestige and genuine pressure developed from its elemental energy seemingly suffocating even the great land. Every portion of its body was surrounded by elemental magic essence. No incantation was needed for it to gather. This elemental magic had already taken shape to form a powerful Primary Level Violet Ranked Elemental Shield.

As the Silver Dragon appeared, Ye Yin Zhu honestly felt as though his body couldn't move. He could barely condense the spiritual force within him in order to withdraw the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance. Using all of his strength, he gradually stood up, resembling an unyielding bamboo. In the end, he straightened his spine, a divine light shining clearly within his eyes.

Using his painting brush to support his body, Ma Liang looked up at the humongous Silver Dragon in the sky. His eyes couldn't refrain from exuding a look of pride. Although he had ended up using all of the magic in reserve, which would take him at least 10 days to recover, this was still the first time he had cast such powerful magic. It made him brim with pride at his accomplishment. A Silver Dragon's attack—even if it was only a single blow, it could in fact match with a Violet Ranked offensive power!

“Go, Silver Dragon. Use your strength to defend your pride and honor.”

The immense Silver Dragon angled its wings downward, following his command. With the circular Violet Ranked Elemental Magic Shield around its body, it resembled a violet tipped, silver meteor as it dove towards Ye Yin Zhu. Even if Ma Liang's magic was unable to genuinely control the Silver Dragon and bring out its full offensive and magical potential, this firm and simple attack was comparable to the strength of Violet Ranked magic!

As the silver meteor shot down, a dazzling beautiful flaming tail followed its

descent. The air within the central training field completely froze. The tremendous aura of energy created a vacuum in an instant. All of the elements nearby had actually been absorbed by the Silver Dragon. The Silver Dragon's might even tore at the central training field's defensive shield, suffocating the spectating students.

"Yin—Zhu—." A sharp, mournful sound echoed from outside the training field. A slender body, using all his strength, struck at the defensive shield of the training field. No matter how much he tried, however, he couldn't break through this Violet Ranked defense!

The silver meteor approached closer, not with the intention to strike him but to swallow him up. Although the Silver Dragon was released by merely a youth, its destructive power was already sufficient to cause great devastation.

With arms opened wide and facing this onslaught, Ye Yin Zhu appeared to be welcoming it with closed eyes. Was he greeting his approaching death?

Ferguson was tense, but Nina still didn't make him stop the match.

Ma Liang was nervous. He was aghast to discover that the Silver Dragon he summoned was more terrifying than he'd imagined. Despite his second thoughts, the magic could not be withdrawn. The Silver Dragon's attack couldn't be reversed. His complexion paled further, and he could only look on helplessly at Ye Yin Zhu's proud, unyielding body as the Silver Dragon swallowed him whole.

Everyone was stunned upon seeing this scene. Could it be that the rising comet of the Divine Music division, its first male student, would die within this match? At this very moment, Nina, still sitting in the rostrum, continued to smile calmly.

A golden ring of light appeared. Giving him the image of a messiah, it emerged from Ye Yin Zhu's body the very moment the Silver Dragon reached him. The ring of light originated from Ye Yin Zhu's left wrist. In a split second, Ye Yin Zhu's body was shrouded with a layer of glittering golden light.

His originally handsome appearance had held an extremely graceful aura. At this moment, when that golden radiance surrounded him, it made Ye Yin Zhu look dazzling, like a divine being blessed by the Gods. He looked like a star had descended onto the earth from the heavens.

The Silver Dragon engulfed him, but as it enveloped him entirely, the Silver Dragon seemed to have become transparent. Everyone could clearly see Ye Yin Zhu's golden light enshrouded body. Unexpectedly, he travelled straight through the Silver Dragon's body.

Boom— — Within the training field, all of the magical elements within the Six Components of the Silver Dragon exploded out at the same time. What kind of power could give rise to such an occurrence?

Chapter 23 – Eternal Substitute Puppet (I)

The central training field flared up. Once the most important area of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts over the past several hundred years, it was now completely destroyed.

The field’s defensive shield was now entirely shattered. Using where Ye Yin Zhu stood as the heart, countless crushed stone and dirt flew into the air as the entire ground subsequently caved. Luckily, Ferguson and all of the division teachers had made their move earlier to pour their magic into the encompassing defensive cover so the central training field’s defenses wouldn’t collapse. Despite this, the earth still violently shook, causing cracks to spread from the central training field and towards its surroundings.

Ma Liang’s body resembled a broken doll as he was flung through the air, crashing heavily against the defensive cover. The impact caused him to groan, his consciousness blacking out. As he lost consciousness, the center of the five streams of silver light exploded out before returning back to the simple and unadorned ring on his hand.

Fortunately, he was relatively far from the center of the explosion. In addition, he had been the one to summon the Silver Dragon. The force of the explosion was the smallest in this location, otherwise such an intense explosive force would have been deadly.

Teachers and students lifelessly watched as dirt and stone flew up from the central training field. They listened to the mass of concentrated noises as dirt and stone fell back to the ground. Who could have anticipated that this kind of situation would crop up in the Freshman Competition? Even a fifth-year graduate wouldn’t be able to cause such a powerful and destructive force. This was only the final battle of the Freshman Competition!

“Quick, save them.” Ferguson, after all, was the President, so he reacted first. At this moment, no other teacher was more anxious than he was. He had just recently received an exceptionally good disciple with potential difficult to find once in a century. How could he be dead already?

The defensive cover opened, and dust assaulted their senses. Several students coughed. Teachers, one after another, jumped down from the rostrum and rushed onto the central training field.

At this moment, a slender silhouette was already rushing towards the training field; its goal was Ma Liang's spot once he'd crashed into the ground.

"I'll kill you." A grief-stricken, sharp snarl rang out. With astonishing speed, the form threw itself at the unconscious Ma Liang, its hand flickering with black lightning. Even the teachers were taken aback at this quick speed and could only look on helplessly as what appeared to be a death god black scythe's blade sliced towards Ma Liang's heart.

"Sura, don't." While no one had enough time to block that black lightning, a violet light was thrown out, even as the dust continued to billow about.

Ding— The black blade paused, Sura's slender figure abruptly halting. A long violet needle was unexpectedly imbedded into the black blade Sura held, the long needle just striking the black blade's edge. It was an extremely bizarre sight.

Sura didn't throw himself at Ma Liang again, instead turning around to stare stupefied at the gradually disappearing dust cloud. He muttered, "Yin Zhu, Yin Zhu, you didn't die?"

A slender silhouette slowly left the cloud of dust, his long black hair gray due to the dust. The dirt on his face lowered the elegance of his face. Only that white robe was still clean.

"Yin Zhu—" At this time, Sura forgot everything. Even his voice became less like a man in sharpness. An assassin's speed allowed one to travel from boundary to boundary in an instant. He crashed into Ye Yin Zhu and hugging him with the ferocity of a baby swallow. His slender arms wrapped around Ye Yin Zhu tightly, as if he was afraid that Yin Zhu would disappear. Tears forced their way out of his eyes, his body trembling fiercely. From extreme sorrow to exultation, it made his breathing extremely erratic.

"Hush, hush. Are you trying to strangle me? I'm filthy," Ye Yin Zhu joked, smiling.

"Doesn't matter. I don't care. You nearly frightened me to death!" Sura

honestly exclaimed, already forgetting their current location.

“Well, don’t cry.” Ye Yin Zhu somewhat bewilderedly comforted Sura.

“You ruined my dagger. It’s very expensive, so you must compensate me.”

“Yes, yes. I’ll compensate you,” Ye Yin Zhu promised as he recalled that Sura held onto both their funds.

The teachers hurriedly followed Ferguson towards the central training field. Where Ye Yin Zhu had previously stood was now a gigantic hole over 20 meters in diameter. The central training field was destroyed. It would take at least a month to fix it. At this moment, however, Ferguson’s mood couldn’t be better as Ye Yin Zhu was all right. What could make him happier than this?

Vieri held the unconscious Ma Liang in bewilderment. He really didn’t understand how all of this happened. A Silver Dragon, that was an actual Silver Dragon summon!

“Hn... cough.” Nina, who stood beside Vieri, coughed.

“Dean Vieri, don’t forget our bet.” The iciness on Nina’s face had disappeared a long time ago as it brimmed with a victorious smile.

Vieri apparently just recalled that event and abruptly stood up from the ground. “Life Guardian, that was a Life Guardian, right? You deliberately tricked me.”

Nina revealed an amazed expression. “Deliberately tricked you? Me? I didn’t force you to agree to our wager. The President and all the other teachers can attest to this. Don’t tell me that you’re saying your student is allowed to use the Six Components of the Silver Dragon, a tool comparable to a divine weapon, while our Divine Music division’s student can’t use the Life Guardian? This reasoning is illogical.”

“You...” Vieri looked at Nina, dumbstruck. He was immediately at a loss for words.

To the side, Ferguson coughed. Failing to refrain from commenting, he smiled and voiced, “Well, Dean Vieri, if you agree to bet, you must accept losses.”

“But... but President, my Eternal Substitute Puppet...”



The Divine Music Division Viewing Platform.

All of the beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division couldn't help but be relieved upon seeing Ye Yin Zhu unexpectedly emerge from the dust.

"Hai Yang, you just pinched me," Xiang Luan whispered into Hai Yang's ear, smiling.

Hai Yang's chest rose and fell heavily. She glanced at Xiang Luan and said, "And you tore the hem of my skirt. Were you afraid that if Ye Yin Zhu died, you wouldn't be able to fulfill your promise?"

Xiang Luan's charming face reddened. "Hai Yang, when did you become so eloquent?"

Hai Yang smiled slightly and retorted, "What about you? I have never seen you so worried about a boy/"

Xiang Luan sighed and commented, "Apparently, this boy, Ye Yin Zhu, doesn't like women. Otherwise, how can he let all of the beauties of our Divine Music division go without choosing one. You see, he is always with that other boy."

"Of course. The brotherly love between them runs deep—it shows their true feelings." After saying these words, Hai Yang's attractive face also reddened subconsciously.



Dark Magic Division Viewing Platform.

Yue Ming lightly patted her chest. "Fortunately, he is all right. If not, who will accompany me to return Ming Xue? He truly is tremendously powerful!"



Wind Division Viewing Platform.

Rolande looked at Ye Yin Zhu, who stood in the center of the field. She stood up with unreasonable indignation. "This damned boy unexpectedly didn't die. His vitality is even more tenacious than those stupid dragons."



Heavy Cavalry Viewing Platform.

Nesta laughed out loud. “It seems my rival is the strongest.”



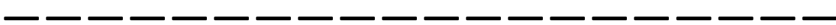
Ferguson stood in the center of the field, smiling at the entire audience. Not necessitating any amplification device, his voice projected to all the platforms.

“Next, I will declare a few items of importance. First, the Freshman Competition has concluded. The champion is the Divine Music division. Runner-up is the Summon division. Third place is the Heavy Cavalry division.

“The competitors of these three divisions will receive specialized training from the institution. At the same time, the institution will waiver these 15 students’ tuition fees for all five years of their education, in addition to their dorm fees. The generals of these three divisions will each obtain a weapon or magic item. The Heavy Cavalry division will get one article, the Summon division will get two articles, and the Divine Music division will get three articles. They will choose their reward from the institution’s treasury.”

This was the standard reward for the Freshman Competition over the past years, so no one felt suspicious.

Chapter 23 – Eternal Substitute Puppet (II)



Ferguson continued, “Secondly, I officially declare that Ye Yin Zhu is not only a Divine Music division student, but that he is also my principal disciple. Earlier, his magic’s apparent advancement from Red to Yellow Rank was because I had gifted him magic equipment to conceal his strength.”

This explanation immediately had everyone in an uproar. Several people thought it was no wonder Ye Yin Zhu could be so powerful. As it turns out, he was actually the President’s disciple. At the same time, the misgivings they held about Ye Yin Zhu’s strength that had skipped ranks were completely resolved. Who would be suspicious of Ferguson, the President of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts and the Chief Court Mage of the Milan Empire?

“Third. The Autumnal Beastmen Harvest War will begin soon. In order to strengthen its students, the institution will choose students to join the army and defend against the enemy. Of course, the institution will be selecting only the most outstanding student from each division to participate in this next combat trial.

“Well, the Freshman Competition has thus ended. Tomorrow, classes will officially begin. I believe that all of you will look at the strengths of these two students who have battled today and will desire to become as strong as them, maybe even surpassing them after investing a great deal of effort. I want to see our Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts be the most prominent institute for raising even more outstanding, talented individuals.”

After announcing these three items, he declared this Freshman Competition to be completely over and that all the students will begin classes tomorrow.

Undoubtedly, the Divine Music division became the highlight of the Freshman Competition, taking an innumerable amount of people aback. From the first match to the last, this dark horse became the ultimate champion in the end. And as the general of the Divine Music division, Ye Yin Zhu naturally became the new, highly wanted romantic interest. He had clearly used his strength in front of everyone and proven that being a Divine Music Mage was not a trash vocation.



“Yin Zhu, that Violet Bamboo Divine Needle of yours is indeed sharp; it can unexpectedly pierce through my dagger.” Sura was half-reclined on his bed, fiddling with the Violet Bamboo Needle that had stopped his assassination of Ma Liang. His face was relaxed as he said this.

It was already approaching evening, and after escaping with great difficulty from the congratulations of others, the two talented individuals could finally relax.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and replied, “The Violet Bamboo Needle is extremely sharp and tenacious. With a bit of condensed dou qi, its penetration power naturally increases. Your black dagger appears to be excellent, but it’s not very durable. I only wanted to knock it a bit off-course.”

Sura complained, “I’m poor, so how can I have a good dagger? Oh, that’s right,

... Yin Zhu, when did you pay respects to the President as a teacher? How come I didn't know?"

Ye Yin Zhu softly said, "Actually, I paid respect to the President as a teacher following my battle with Nesta that day. It's just that... in order for the President to help me conceal the fact that I skipped a rank, he told me I had to become his disciple." To Sura, he felt there was no need to hide anything. After today's match earlier, Sura's emotional outbreak had become eternally engraved into his mind; it would be impossible for him to forget it. Apart from Zi, Ye Yin Zhu already considered Sura to be his best friend.

Sura giggled, saying, "It seems that the President is indeed very fond of you. So, this next frontline war, are you participating?"

Ye Yin Zhu replied, "I should be. Teacher told me to prepare. Sura, is it no longer a peacetime? From what teacher said, we're going to war with the beastmen?"

Sura rolled his eyes, saying, "Ye Yin Zhu, from now on I'm calling you Ye Bai Chi1. There are many things you don't know that is considered general knowledge. The beastmen races live in the Northern Wasteland, a bitter and cold place. They basically can't grow crops there, so they can only exploit the natural resources for food to subsist on. Perhaps through trade, they can use the Northern Wasteland specialties to exchange for foodstuff from human countries. During the spring and summer, the vegetation flourishes, and the animals reproduce. It is unlikely for them to have an extremely challenging time acquiring food.

"During the winter, however, the beastmen immediately begin having difficulty with their food supplies. That is why, whenever autumn approaches, the beastmen start dispatching troops; they believe this method is better than negotiating for foodstuffs with the human countries they border with. This is called the Autumnal Harvest War, but the war isn't very large. It's mainly some local fights, that's all. Thus, whenever autumn approaches, the Milan Empire, Ascoli Kingdom, and Florence Kingdom would put together troops to contend against the beastmen and subsidize the damage. We will also be partaking in the battle to defend the border."

“We? Sura, don’t tell me you are also participating?” Ye Yin Zhu looked at him in surprise.

Sura smiled proudly and said, “Although the Assassin division didn’t participate in the Freshman Competition, some military experts are bound to be from our vocation. The army scouts and common light cavalry soldiers are outfitted the same. It appears assassins might be the most welcomed branch of the armed forces. A good assassin can give the army a lot of useful information; they can even assassinate the enemy general. As the leader of the first years within the Assassin division, shouldn’t you say why shouldn’t I be participating?”

“You are the leader of the first-years within the Assassin division?” Ye Yin Zhu asked. The smile at the corners of his mouth became even more obvious.

“What? Not convinced?! I might not necessarily be able to beat you in the arena, but if the terrain was complex, then you might not be my match.” While he spoke, the dagger, with a hole still through it, flashed green within his hand.

In his heart, Ye Yin Zhu was alarmed. Green Rank dou qi... not only that, it was Intermediate Level. In regards to dou qi strength, Sura was unexpectedly stronger than Nesta. This was something he absolutely hadn’t anticipated.

“Sura, I ruined your dagger; this gift is your compensation.” As he spoke, Ye Yin Zhu withdrew something from his chest, offering it to Sura.

Sura took the gift. It was an amethyst sculpture carved into the shape of a human. Bizarrely, the sculpture didn’t have a face. Its outer appearance was nothing special, but when Sura turned it over in his hand, he was amazed to discover that this amethyst human sculpture held a very strange, fluctuating elemental energy. He couldn’t determine specifically what he sensed.

“What is this?” Sura curiously asked.

Ye Yin Zhu explained, “Grandma Nina gave it to me this afternoon. She said she won it from the Summon division. It’s called an Eternal Substitute Puppet. You only need to drip a drop of blood on it for it to recognize you as its master. It seems to be something to protect the body.”

“What did you say? Eternal Substitute Puppet?” Sura violently sat up on the bed, a shocked look on his face as he stared at Ye Yin Zhu.

“Yes! It’s an Eternal Substitute Puppet. What’s wrong?” Ye Yin Zhu naturally asked.

Sura’s voice trembled. “Yin Zhu, do you not know what an Eternal Substitute Puppet is?”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head. “I don’t know any specifics about it.”

Sura’s face became significantly solemn. “The Eternal Substitute Puppet is also known as the Immortal Body. It’s a low ranked divine item. It’s a divine item!”

“Oh.” Ye Yin Zhu stretched his body, not amazed by the two words, ‘divine item.’

“Hey, did you hear what I just said?” Sura was really dissatisfied with Ye Yin Zhu’s behavior.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled, saying, “A divine item is a divine item. It’s now yours.”

Chapter 23 – Eternal Substitute Puppet (III)

Sura stiffened, staring into Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes with his own lifeless ones. ‘He, he actually gave me a divine item.’

He lightly shook his head. “No, I can’t accept this. Although I don’t know why Dean Nina treats you so well, she had given this divine item to you. This is yours. As a mage, you need it more than me. An Eternal Substitute Puppet can only be used by one master. Since this divine item only recognizes one master, it is a low level divine item. Its usefulness, however, is unlike any other divine item. Its sole ability is immunity against any and all physical attacks, even dou qi-filled attacks.” Walking up to Ye Yin Zhu, he extended the amethyst human sculpture once again, handing it over.

“Sura, aren’t we friends?” Ye Yin Zhu asked, frowning.

“Of course we are friends,” Sura replied without any hesitation.

“So, between friends, what is yours is mine, and what is mine is yours. How can

I retake my gift? Don't tell me you think our friendship is not as precious as a divine item?" Ye Yin Zhu's voice held a trace of anger. A malicious look even began to form within his clear eyes.

"But— ownership of the Eternal Substitute Puppet cannot be changed. If the master dies, it disappears. In the history of the continent, the Eternal Substitute Puppet has only appeared thrice. Among these, two of its masters have already died. In other words, this is the last one! Its value is priceless."

Ye Yin Zhu didn't speak. His eyes already regained their tranquility, but the tranquility held an iciness. Rising up, he indifferently said, "I need to go. Sura, I hope that when I return, it will already have recognized its master." After he said these words, he patted Sura's slender shoulders before turning around and leaving the room.

Sura stared blankly into space. This was the first time he had seen Ye Yin Zhu display such an expression since they'd met. He knew he had already hurt Yin Zhu. Translucent tears flowed down his cheeks. "Yin Zhu, do you really think I'm that important? You fool, you really are a fool." Looking at the amethyst human sculpture in his hand, he suddenly discovered that this incomparably precious divine item was worthless to him. At least, in comparison to his relationship with Ye Yin Zhu, this was merely an item, nothing more.

Wiping away his tears, Sura smiled. His smile was very sweet as both his hands clasped the amethyst human sculpture. He looked as though he held his and Ye Yin Zhu's affections within his hands. Now he knew he had already obtained the most precious thing in the world. Without the slightest bit of hesitation, he bit his finger, a drop of scarlet blood dripping onto the amethyst human sculpture.

It absorbed the drop of blood like a sponge, leaving no trace behind. A faint violet halo of light formed beneath the human sculpture, extending in the blink of an eye to the size of a regular human. Gradually, the human sculpture began to change. The amethyst sculpture was alive. The violet halo of light unceasingly extended as a figure began forming.

The clear, sparkling amethyst human sculpture changed into a slim and slender figure. Its chest slightly swelled, and delicate facial features quietly took shape. A blush appeared on Sura's face. His blood had been the bridge between him and

the Eternal Substitute Puppet. In that faint violet halo of light, the amethyst human sculpture began to grow in size. Just like Zi and Ye Yin Zhu's bodies that time, it began to merge with Sura's body.

Standing on the trail outside the villa, Ye Yin Zhu looked back at his villa residence. He said to himself, "Sura, don't make me disappointed. If our friendship can be weighed with items, then is it truly friendship?"

Stretching out his hand, he looked at the slip of paper within his palm. The slip held an address. Looking back at his residence, he soared into the sky. With a few dou qi-concentrated jumps, he disappeared past the end of the trail.



The Summon division; as an integral part of the Magic Department, its student dormitory conditions were also excellent. The disparity between them and the individual members of the Divine Music division with their small villas, however, was large. Only those powerful or wealthy enough among the students could have their own residence here. Ma Liang was evidently of the former.

At this moment, Ma Liang's brows were furrowed as he lay on his bed. His head felt very sore. It wasn't because of excessive magic use during the afternoon; it was because of Summon division Dean Vieri, who felt extremely vexed at Ma Liang and had stayed since the afternoon, had only just left a moment ago. He was somewhat glad, however, that the Six Components of the Silver Dragon, apart from the Silver Dragon blood, had already recognized him as their master. Otherwise, Vieri might have seized them as compensation for the loss of his Eternal Substitute Puppet.

"Ma Liang, I have arrived." A clear voice rang from outside the dormitory, rousing Ma Liang from his thoughts. He hastily sat up and left his bed.

"Elder Brother Ye? Quickly, come in."

Ye Yin Zhu ducked and entered. On the slip of paper Ma Liang had given him earlier today on the training field was the exact address to this dormitory.

Ma Liang's body trembled slightly as he pulled out a chair. He earnestly said, "Elder Brother Ye, I truly need to thank you for today. I heard that if you hadn't blocked that attack... I'm afraid that your friend would have killed me. I originally

believed I could control the Silver Dragon. Who would have imagined it would ultimately go berserk? Luckily, the heavens favor you. Otherwise, I really wouldn't have known how to deal with the aftermath."

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, "It's hard to avoid mishaps in a competition. It's already over. You can just call me Yin Zhu."

Looking at him, Ma Liang smiled as well. He suddenly found this Zither Sect disciple to be even more adorable than he had imagined. He simply couldn't hold a grudge.

Ma Liang walked to the window and looked outside. He then turned around and whispered, "Yin Zhu, I really didn't expect to meet you at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. If my assumption is correct, you are definitely the disciple of Patriarch Qin. Only Patriarch Qin could have instructed you to become such a remarkable expert."

Ye Yin Zhu laughed. "What kind of master am I? That day, I barely entered the Courageous Zither Heart Realm during that match with Nesta. You are stronger than me. If not for the Life Guardian blocking your attack earlier today, I would have lost."

Ma Liang bitterly smiled. "I also didn't use my own power. Everyone has magic items. Your Life Guardian just happens to be under your control while I can only use a Silver Dragon. Well, let's end the pleasantries. Did Patriarch Qin allow you to come here?"

Ye Yin Zhu nodded.

Ma Liang pensively said, "If that's so, then the institution will have had disciples of three of our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects. Yin Zhu, you must be a bit more careful from now on. Although I don't know why the President covered up the matter of you skipping ranks, you might not have this kind of fortune in the future. As a member of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects, no matter what, from now on you must be more careful."

Ye Yin Zhu looked at him in surprise. "Why? Are you telling me our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects are shameful?"

A cold light flashed through Ma Liang's eyes. "Of course not. Our strength is

currently not enough, however, and we are still far from being able to contend against Blue Dias Seven Pagoda. As a result, we can only endure silently. If not, we would be arrested for heresy; it would be impossible for us to return alive from that.”

Ye Yin Zhu frowned and said, “I don’t understand the relationship between us and the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda.”

Ma Liang stared at him in amazement. “You don’t know? Don’t tell me Patriarch Qin hadn’t told you about the matters concerning our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects?”

Ye Yin Zhu blankly shook his head, explaining, “Grandfather Qin never told me anything! He only told me to hide my strength from others as much as possible. He didn’t want our Zither Sect secrets to be revealed, that’s all.”

Chapter 23 – Eternal Substitute Puppet (IV)

Ma Liang thoughtfully said, “That shouldn’t be right! According to your strength, you should have already known the secrets of our Eastern Dragon. Since you don’t know, I’m not telling you. Have Patriarch Qin tell you later; you only need to remember what I say. Be careful, strive to cultivate and increase your strength. Those of us in the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts will need to take care of one another in the future.

“Oh, by the way... the generational disciple of the Chess Sect has already entered the institution and is in the same year as us. He was with me and was the Spatial Domain division general for the Freshman Competition. You missed each other in battle, so you have yet to meet him. Some other day, I will arrange for the two of you to meet. My injury should require roughly a week to heal. Fortunately, I will be able to participate in this year’s border defense war. When the time comes, we can fight side by side.”



Walking back to his dormitory, Ye Yin Zhu’s mind couldn’t help but brim with misgivings. ‘When all’s said and done, what secrets does the Eight Eastern

Dragon Sects have? Why didn't my grandfather or Grandfather Qin tell me? Maybe dad's departure from the Desolate Jade Sea at the same time had something to do with the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects.'

A long time had passed since leaving the Desolate Jade Sea and entering the mainland. Ye Yin Zhu's mind had rapidly matured since then, especially when he entered the Courageous Zither Heart Realm.

Just as he arrived at the door of his dormitory, an aroma assaulted Ye Yin Zhu's senses. His belly subconsciously growled, making him realize that he was hungry.

"Yin Zhu, you're back. Come eat. I just finished." Passing through the door, Ye Yin Zhu came upon a busy Sura, who pulled him over. Today's evening meal was particularly scrumptious. There were four dishes and soup; there were even two meat dishes. Ever since the two of them began living together, this was the most delicious cuisine presented.

"Sura, you..."

Sura smiled and said, "What? Come and eat, I don't want to hear you talk nonsense. Look." As he spoke, his body flashed slightly. Ye Yin Zhu felt as though his eyes were playing tricks on him. Sura had unexpectedly become see-through. Yes, his entire body had become transparent.

Reaching out a hand to touch this illusion, Ye Yin Zhu was shocked to discover his hand phasing through Sura's body. He exclaimed in shock, "Sura, what happened to you?"

Sura smiled. "Fool, this is the Eternal Substitute Puppet's effect! When the Eternal Substitute Puppet is used, it can fuse together with its master. Whenever I receive an attack or exercise control over it, the fused body becomes illusory. I realized that not only will I be immune to all physical and dou qi attacks, but my speed increases as well. This is indeed fitting for an assassin."

Ye Yin Zhu looked like a child as he used his hand to poke at Sura's body. He truly felt nothing. "Phenomenal. This really is phenomenal. Doesn't this make you unparalleled?"

Sura broke out into laughter. "How is that possible? Magic can still harm me. Magical attacks are the only things capable of circumventing the Eternal

Substitute Puppet. I can only rely on my dou qi to resist magic. Well, let's eat.” Once he finished speaking, his figure flashed, and Ye Yin Zhu's hand was rebuffed as he became a corporal existence once more.

Color, scent, taste, every part of this evening meal made Ye Yin Zhu delighted as he ate. He didn't realize that the Eternal Substitute Puppet he gifted Sura would create such large changes in Sura's mood. His appearance, facial expression, and the look in his eyes all became softer.



Early the next morning, when the sunlight roused new life into the Milan Institution, Ye Yin Zhu had already arrived to the first-year classroom of the Divine Music division's school building. Today was the first day of classes, and he wanted to learn new things from the Milan Institution. At the same time, he came early for an additional reason.

When the beautiful ladies of the Divine Music division arrived at the school building, Ye Yin Zhu located Hai Yang and his own classmates, Lan Xi, Xue Ling, and Kong Que.

“What type of reward do you want? It's a pity that it's only three items; I can't give each of you an item.” Ye Yin Zhu felt embarrassed as he explained the issue to the four girls. After the competition concluded yesterday, Ferguson had told the top three divisions' generals to come early this morning to select their prizes.

The four girls glanced at each other. Lan Xi said, amazed, “Yin Zhu, it's natural for the institution's rewards to go to the victorious division general!”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. “We competed as a team! The rewards should be divided amongst everyone. I can't monopolize all of it. As far as I'm concerned, the waived tuition fee and dormitory expenses are excellent rewards.”

Hai Yang gazed calmly at Ye Yin Zhu. She shook her said, saying, “I don't want anything. All of you can talk it over. I need to get to class.” Once she finished speaking, she turned around and left for her classroom, not waiting for Ye Yin Zhu to respond.

Kong Que groaned. “Always so cold and icy, who does she think she is? I also don't want anything because... I am also not lacking in anything.”

Xue Ling and Lan Xi nodded simultaneously. Xue Ling candidly smiled and explained, “Yin Zhu, we appreciate your kindness, but we really don’t need anything. Besides, without you, we wouldn’t have even taken part in the competition. We have seen you invest a lot of effort into becoming the final champion. On the field, if you hadn’t protected us, I’m afraid we would have been wounded. You deserve those rewards.”

Lan Xi supported Xue Ling’s words. “Yes! Yin Zhu, just remember to teach me how to play well when you have the time.”

“Alright,” Ye Yin Zhu helplessly said. “Then I’ll choose based on my needs. If you ever need anything, just talk to me.”



The Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts’s treasury held many magic items; it was unlikely that its contents would pale in comparison to the Milan Empire’s Royal Treasury. As well, the gifts from the nobility in each country and the rewards from the Milan Royalty couldn’t be compared. Ye Yin Zhu, Ma Liang, and Nesta followed Ferguson past the three security checkpoints, then passed through an additional, powerful magically defended entrance afterward.

Ferguson chanted lowly and closed the entrance behind them. He smiled and said, “Well, you can now choose as you please. There are common weapons and magic items here, along with many fine works. You can choose anything, so I wish you luck and insight.” Only the President had the power to open the treasury. If he didn’t guide them, then even a rank 9 magical beast would find it impossible to break in.

The treasury was enormous, spanning as far as the eye could see. Row after row of innumerable shelves were filled with items, the majority of them flickering with lustrous rays of light. In the dark they appeared dazzling. Different kinds of elements fluctuated here at irregular intervals, causing people to feel very uncomfortable.

“This guy, Ye Yin Zhu, ruined my armor, so I will need a good set.” Nesta already determined his goal, so he immediately walked towards the defense equipment that were left of the display shelves.

Ma Liang smiled faintly and said, “I want a magic defense type of treasure,

preferably one that can lessen magic consumption.” Using the Six Components of the Silver Dragon with his current strength was honestly difficult. He was naturally anxious to find a suitable item for himself. After he spoke, he headed towards the magic items on the right and began to carefully search.

“Yin Zhu, what about you? You can choose three items.” Ferguson smiled towards Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu blankly said, “Teacher, I don’t know what to choose. Why don’t you choose for me?”

Ferguson continued to smile. “That’s out of the question. I won’t choose for you. This way people can’t say I’m showing my disciple favoritism! Choose on your own, okay? I can remind you, however, that at times it is the unremarkable things that can be exceedingly precious.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s heart was moved. He said, “Teacher, are there any zithers here?” He had lost the five ranked zithers of the Zither Sect, so he now only had the zither Dean Nina gifted him—the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither. Different zither songs suited different zithers, and the perfect combination would bring out the best effect.

Ferguson chuckled. “There might be. There are a lot of items here, so I can’t remember. Go and see if you can find any. I have to leave. In an hour, I will come back for all of you. Bear in mind that you only have an hour’s time. When that moment comes, regardless of what you have chosen, you have to follow me and leave. Don’t think about stealing any of the items, as each item has a magical trace only I can remove. Only with its removal will you be allowed to leave with it.”

Chapter 24 – Zither of Divinity (I)

Ye Yin Zhu hesitated on what to pick for a long time. He suddenly heard Nesta cry out in surprise. “Wow! What a large sword! Who can even use this?”

Sword? Ye Yin Zhu curiously quickened his steps, bypassing the display shelves to find a stunned Nesta.

Nesta was currently gazing at a weapon in front of him. It was a double-edged sword—incomparably large. Its girth was contrary to that of a common sword.

This treasury was extremely large, yet with the treasury’s height of at least 10 meters, that sword needed to be tilted so that it would fit. It was a meter wide, and its length exceeded 10 meters. It was half a meter thick, and the whole blade appeared to be dark-blue in color. The sword’s blade didn’t have any fullers¹ because it didn’t make sense for such a gigantic sword to have any. Its weight was impossible to assess. At the very least, Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t estimate it.

This dark-blue blade had a decorative dark-blue design in the center. The decorative design was simple and clearly indicated that it originated from an ancient era. It wouldn’t have been able to fit in the treasury if it wasn’t tilted. Moreover, the large sword’s hilt surpassed 3 meters. Perhaps no one would consider this a sword.

Perhaps because it didn’t need it, the blade and the hilt were left unadorned, excluding the decorative design. A viscous feeling as well as a faint bloody aura was emitted, making people feel that it was absolutely not simple.

Slowly advancing, Ye Yin Zhu mimicked Nesta and stroked the dark-blue sword blade. Suddenly, he felt an electric shock that made his whole body quiver. It brimmed with a ruthless aura, as if the heavens and earth would move before its tyranny. Mixed in was an intensely familiar feeling. It seemed like this sword recognized him, called to him.

“Nesta, do you feel anything?” Ye Yin Zhu subconsciously asked.

Nesta blankly shook his head. “Feel? What feeling. This sword is truly

mystifying! I discern that with its weight, it can definitely behead a mature Gigantic Dragon. My Blood Soul Spear is already the longest among dragonspears, and it's only about eight meters long. This sword unexpectedly surpasses thirteen meters in length. This is simply inconceivable. From what I see, only a Behemoth from the Northern Wasteland can wield it with its weight, and that's only if they were at least a Gold Behemoth. Behemoths are more advantageous with their claws, however, so they never use any weapons."

Ye Yin Zhu looked at him in puzzlement. Could it be that only he could feel its domineering and familiar air? Why? Looking at the faint dark-blue sheen of the sword's blade, he could see his reflection within it. When he looked, Ye Yin Zhu was amazed to discover that in the blade's reflection, his eyes were emitting a faint violet light. His originally handsome and gentle face became significantly more authoritative and overbearing because of those violet eyes.

A faint warmth circulated through his meridians, and that power-filled feeling appearing once more. He carefully inspected the decorative design on that gigantic sword's blade. Suddenly, the decorative design morphed. The sword blade's dark-blue color seemed to become a sparkling and translucent violet for a split second, brimming with a brutal and murderous air. That decorative design rapidly changed, and a large word appeared on the center of the sword blade, flickering and shining.

Amethyst—

These two simple words made Ye Yin Zhu's heartstrings break. Amethyst Sword? This was its name?

"I will take it. Nesta, it's unlikely that you will want it."

"Eh? Are you insane? Are you telling me you actually want to become a warrior? But—this sword is extremely large. It doesn't suit you." Nesta looked at him in shock.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and elaborated. "No, I don't want to become a warrior, but I like this sword. Maybe a friend of mine would like it. I will take it."

Nesta was at a loss. "Who is it that can make you squander one of your three rewards as champion on? Well, it's your choice. Only, it appears that in this treasury, this sword is absolutely the best. I have no interest in it; I just want to

obtain a suitable armor.” Having said this, he dared not waste any more time and hurriedly headed towards the treasury’s stock of defensive equipment.

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t add the Amethyst Sword to his space ring as he recalled Ferguson saying that the items here had a magical trace. Plus, this large sword was extremely big. Its weight was at least 500 kilograms. He had no other choice but to leave it here and wait for the hour to finish so that Ferguson can undo the magical brand. Only then could he place it in his space ring.

Releasing the Amethyst Sword, that familiar feeling immediately disappeared. He turned around and prepared to explore the treasury. He wanted to see if there were any zithers. If there was a zither, then naturally it would be his top choice.

Just as he turned to leave the weapon section, an unremarkable item suddenly caught his gaze. It was a dagger, completely pitch black, appearing somewhat lofty among the multi-colored jeweled lights of the other items. Most peculiarly, it didn’t reflect any light at all, slightly resembling Sura’s dagger.

Taking a few steps forward, Ye Yin Zhu grasped the dagger. It was almost 40 centimeters long, the length somewhere between that of a short sword and dagger. Its handle was 12 centimeters long, its blade 16 centimeters. The pommel held a malevolent carving of a demon. Within its eyes, peculiarly, were two minute rubies that flickered with an abnormal light.

It was the exact opposite of the large Amethyst Sword. The large Amethyst Sword brimmed with a familiar feeling upon touching it, while this dagger gave Ye Yin Zhu an intense feeling of hatred upon his touch. The icy aura spread from his palm and through his meridians to the rest of his body. The pores throughout his body seemed as if they were sealed shut because of this chill, making him feel extremely uncomfortable.

The dagger seemed to radiate a layer of faint black energy. Because of this layer of faint black energy, it prevented the dagger from reflecting light from any angle. Even the two rubies were like this.

Very quickly, Ye Yin Zhu clearly understood why this dagger gave such a repulsive feeling. It was because this dagger’s dark elemental energy wave was extremely terrifying. A tremendous amount of dark elements seemed to be

magically sealed into this dagger. A trace of frigid chill and a feeling of malevolence were continuously emitted.

Although he didn't like it, Ye Yin Zhu could clearly feel that this dagger was very powerful. When he held it in his hand, all of the light being emitted by the surrounding weapons and defensive equipment lost their luster. Only the large Amethyst Sword continued to tower over everything, remaining unchanged.

This was it. Although he didn't like it, Sura was an assassin. He assumed Sura would love this nonreflective dagger. That day, he had recklessly used his Violet Bamboo Needle to skewer Sura's dagger, destroying it as it didn't have a very strong magical matrix. Although he had already gifted Sura with the Eternal Substitute Puppet as compensation, the four girls had refused his gesture of kindness. Thus, he decided to select this dagger to further recompense Sura.

Ye Yin Zhu placed the dagger beside the large Amethyst Sword, preparing to return to them with his final chosen item. Suddenly, the large Amethyst Sword flashed with a dark-blue light, a tyrannical aura surged out abruptly, followed by a clear dragon's cry. That black dagger was unexpectedly attacked by the tyrannical aura. It made a streak of black light as it zoomed past Ye Yin Zhu. The dagger's blade partially pierced through the display shelf beside him.

Chapter 24 – Zither of Divinity (II)



Although it merely brushed past him without a single touch, that momentary iciness caused Ye Yin Zhu's whole body to tremble faintly. The iciness of the dagger brimmed with a frigid feeling of death. Could it be that the large Amethyst Sword was repelling it? When he turned back to inspect the large Amethyst Sword, he sensed from the sword's blade the feeling of a monarch overlooking his realm. Yes, it was as if a monarch was overlooking his realm.

"Yin Zhu, what's wrong?" Ma Liang and Nesta rushed up at nearly the same time. Ye Yin Zhu didn't bother covering up the truth and explained what had happened just now. The two couldn't help but be astonished.

Ma Liang said, "This dagger is pretty good. I like it. It's a pity that I'm not a warrior. As for this gigantic sword, I'm underwhelmed. Even if it is better, what can you even do with it? Yin Zhu, you want such good things!"

Ye Yin Zhu smiled slightly and said, “My choices won’t change. No matter what you say, I like them very much. Well, the two of you can go find your selections. This dagger and gigantic sword are mine. Anyway, according to Nesta’s temperament, you also won’t use this dagger. Have I spoken incorrectly?”

Nesta laughed out loud. “You understand me. I have already chosen my reward. It’s over there; let me show it to you.” Finished speaking, he immediately ran off, full of joy and expectations.

Ma Liang also returned to digging through the treasures while Ye Yin Zhu began to look everywhere in the treasury.

Minutes passed by. Soon, the hour deadline would arrive, yet Ye Yin Zhu still hadn’t chosen his third reward. He had explored the entire treasury and had yet to find traces of a zither. Furthermore, for some unknown reason, he couldn’t find any magic items, weapons, or armor that could satisfy him after he had discovered the black dagger and large Amethyst Sword. Or rather, nothing else interested him.

“There are so many good things here. It’s a pity I can only choose two items. Yin Zhu, have you not finished choosing?” Ma Liang asked Ye Yin Zhu.

“Not yet, I still need to choose one more item, but I don’t know what to choose. I want a zither, but there doesn’t seem to be one.”

Ma Liang said, “Maybe you just haven’t found it yet. I think there are too many things here. Just now, I was also searching for some musical instruments, but how come I couldn’t find any zithers?” After he said this, he lowered his voice. “Could it be that your Zither Sect doesn’t have a special method to locate zithers?”

Hearing this inquiry, Ye Yin Zhu’s clear eyes suddenly brightened. ‘That’s right! How could I forget about that method?’

With this thought, he immediately moved, summoning the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither from his space ring. Hugging it to his chest with his left hand, Ye Yin Zhu’s right hand lightly caressed the zither. Light yellow magic quietly emerged, encompassing the four fingers of his right hand. His fingers streaked across the strings. A low hum echoed out.

The treasury was a sealed room, and the echoing zither note immediately reverberated throughout the entire area. After the zither note resonated everywhere, Ye Yin Zhu pressed his right hand down on the strings, cutting off the lingering sound while listening carefully and concentrating his spiritual force.

The zither note resonated throughout the treasury. All of a sudden, Yin Zhu opened his eyes in delight and quickly walked towards a direction.

While learning the zither, Qin Shang had told him that a good zither could hear the notes of other zithers and resonate with them. This resonance could only be heard by Divine Music mages as well along with the quivering tunes.

At this moment, within the notes of the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance Zither, he caught a kind of sound from inside the treasury, as expected. That zither resonance was very crisp. The majority of zithers' muffled humming were different. Ye Yin Zhu was confident in himself, however, and confident in the impossibility of him mishearing. Although the guzheng and the pipa were also stringed instruments, such a resounding and sinuous guqin note echoed from far away. What kind of guqin could this be?

Following the zither sound, Ye Yin Zhu quickly reached a corner of the treasury. Ma Liang curiously followed behind him. There were several display shelves with all kinds of magic items arranged atop them, emitting faint halos of light. None of those shelves, however, held a zither.

Ye Yin Zhu withdrew the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance once more, liberally relying on his own magic to reinforce his hearing. Paying extremely close attention to the crisp zither notes being emitted, he approached its source.

At last, he caught sight of the zither notes' origin. It was unexpectedly a ring. Definitely a ring. The topaz ring's style was very simple. The gem's luster was glossy, but it didn't emit light. That hum of zither notes actually originated from this source.

Ye Yin Zhu immediately determined the ring's attribute; it was a space ring. At the same time, he held great alarm in his heart. Even though he was not in contact with the space ring, he could still hear the zither's musical resonance.

What kind of guqin could this be?! It was too inconceivable. Regardless of whether it were his five ranked guqins from the Zither Sect he'd lost or his

current Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance, it would be impossible for him to sense them if they were within a space ring. This guqin differed, which could only prove that the zither within the space ring was incomparable to any other guqin Ye Yin Zhu had ever seen.

Picking up the ring, Ye Yin Zhu sent out his spiritual force to link with it. Generally speaking, if the space ring didn't recognize a master, it wouldn't have a spiritual imprint. Any mage could then link up their spiritual force with the ring, acquiring all of its contents. Of course, if a mage's space ring held no spiritual imprint, it was unlikely that the mage had deposited precious things in it. Before his eyes, this space ring was clearly unique.

Ye Yin Zhu easily obtained his objective as a spiritual connection surged into existence. With a spark of light, a guqin appeared out of nowhere above his hands.

The guqin's entire body was orange with a simple style. Seven sparkling and translucent strings passed through its body, their composition unknown. A layer of faint orange light circulated around it. A mere glance at the light encompassing the zither formed the notion that it was emitting a sorrowful air. The zither's resonance was still continuing, seemingly sobbing and moaning. Although none of its strings were plucked, the zither music's clarity and rawness caused the mind to become completely intoxicated, making one lose all sense of self.

With one hand propping up the zither and the other lightly caressing it, Ye Yin Zhu's body looked listless. At this very moment, his eyes brimmed with tender sentiments. Naturally, he had lost himself to the zither—completely.

Ma Liang stood behind him, not disturbing him at all. Although Ma Liang didn't have a high understanding of zithers, he realized that the current Yin Zhu had already entered an extraordinary state. This bizarre guqin had drawn him into this state. The guqin didn't have any elemental wave energy, but it held an aura.

Regardless of whether they were weapons, armor, and any other kinds of magic items, from weakest to strongest, they were classified as mundane devices, essence devices, spirit devices, soul devices, and divine devices—these five grades. Among these, a soul device and divine device's most defining

attribute was an aura. The presence of aura indicated the existence of a soul within the soul and divine devices.

The Six Components of the Silver Dragon was the highest quality soul device and possessed the grandeur, power, and tyrannical aura of a Silver Dragon. As of this moment, however, this orange guqin possessed the richest aura Ma Liang had ever seen. Even his Six Components of the Silver Dragon could only be distantly compared with it. When all was said and done, even if he didn't know anything, he understood that Ye Yin Zhu had indeed found a treasure this time.

As Ma Liang thought this, Ye Yin Zhu had already immersed himself completely into another realm. His mind entered an orange space. He was no longer able to sense his surroundings, instead only able to hear the soft song of the orange guqin.

Chapter 24 – Zither of Divinity (III)

—————

A faintly discernable sound echoed deeply within Ye Yin Zhu's heart. The music was melancholic and crisp, with an undulating and indeterminable mood, as if this sorrowful melody was giving voice to a song of wondrous yearning:

“I am a pearl in the hands of God. In God's hand, I have been reincarnating for five hundred years.

“Five hundred years ago, people called me Ming Zhu. I was called Lady Lan Ming Zhu.

“During my 18 years, I fell in love with a man called Qin Zhi. He was twenty years my senior, but I still love him without any misgivings. I remember facing the sun during the dawn, pursuing an adorable white-feathered sparrow into the Maple Forest. I then heard the cries of the zither, its clarity and smoothness—it resembled a tranquil, unperturbed stream, a celestial melody!

“I saw him, Qin Zhi. A clear male figure dressed in white. He sat upright atop a floor of red autumnal leaves, his hair slightly covering his face. Both hands, like running water, lightly caressed an orange guqin in front of him, intoxicating every living creature with its celestial melody. Ever since that moment, I had

fallen in love with him with no chance to return. Along with that smooth zither music as fluid as clouds, the red autumnal leaves fell gently, painting the sky with its color as accompaniment. I couldn't help but dance the <<Raiment of Rainbows and Feathers>>. So, under a sky full of red autumnal leaves and with a strange white clothed man, I danced!

“The Blue Dias of the Lan clan held the power to overturn the whole world, with the most wealth under the heavens—how I wished I was merely an ordinary girl! But I was not. I was Lan Ming Zhu and the beloved daughter of the Patriarch of the Lan clan. Qin Zhi, that senior twenty years older than I whom I desperately love, was only a wanderer, no home to his name. Even more, he wasn't a wandering bard; a Divine Music Mage was not considered a wandering bard, as they performed to make a living——

“‘A shameful identity and a large age difference, it would be harmful to the Lan clan's reputation, so— cannot mate!’ Father had said. Afterwards, our relationship was forbidden.

“But I was the eldest daughter of the Lan clan. I had never been afraid of any matter nor anyone. I am my father's sole daughter. Even though I had seen him beat servants to death for a single mistake, I was not afraid of him.

“I tried to find him by any and all means possible, honestly telling everyone, ‘I'm in love with him, so no matter what, I want to be together with him.’

“One evening, with the drizzling rain as company, I once more stole out in search for him, but I found him collapsed on the ground. His body was bloodied, as scarlet as Eijitsu roses blossoming in the night!

“‘Father did it... It was him... It was him...’ So I concluded!

“He once told me: ‘If I am happy, then he can only be my happiness for several days, but if I am broken-hearted, then he would help me bear the pain for several years. Now, however, my father had killed him! I didn't shed tears because tears were already flowing from my heart— across my face was a maniacal smile, like a saint jumping brazenly into the glorious wind. The abnormal omen of misfortune, the secrecy...

“——Of course this was father's masterpiece!

“.....

“——I swore I had only intended to frighten him; I truly didn't intend to kill father. I had only placed a serpent in father's bed. Of course, I was resentful and vengeful towards him for killing Qin Zhu, but I truly didn't intend to kill him. The fact was, however, that I had killed my father! Yes, I killed the one who had never glared at me, the one who loved me, pampered me, and even allowed me to run amok and pull on his beard!

“It didn't matter if he wasn't a good man. To me, he was a good father! Thus, in this world, I was not worthy of his love, so I left reluctantly. With a flick of my wrist, the scissors slashed a graceful arc. I smiled afterwards—carefree.

“I was a pearl in the hands of God. In God's hand, I searched for five hundred years. Since I knew of God's existence, I clearly comprehended all possibilities available. I sought God in order to force him to allow me to see him, and God always told me, 'Karma is determined by the heavens. Because his life with you has ended, even if you see him again, he would not recognize you.'

“I said, 'I don't care. I only want to see him, to see the one that made me love him for five hundred years and long for him for five hundred years.'

“God told me I was already part of God's domain. If I wanted to go, I must remember to not shed tears. God stressed that emotions must not pollute the earthly realm and must not influence the realm. Permanent tranquility—no fear, no happiness, no sorrow, no anger.

“I promised I wouldn't, especially since I was already in the hands of God and had been reincarnating for five hundred years, already possessing divine karma. I merely wanted to look for him, to resolve this cherished desire. I would've returned afterwards, continuing my reincarnations in the hands of God.

“God allowed me to turn into this beautiful butterfly.

“One day, two days.. I flew over the limitless ocean.

“One month, two months... I flew over the vast desert.

“One year, two years... I overcame mountain after mountain.

“I arrived at last to the Maple Forest, which still filled the whole sky with

swirling red autumnal leaves! His life, five hundred years ago, was free and at ease, without fear. I was only happy for a short time. Because I saw this lonely person with a young girl clothed in a pink gauze dress danced lightly in front of him as he played an orange guqin. He plucked out << Thoughts on a Tranquil Night >> with a smile across his face and his eyes focused solely on her figure.

“He——gripped her hand, eyes filled with deep love, and said, ‘You are exquisite.’

“They snuggled together. ‘You are exquisite.’ He had told me this five hundred years ago in the Maple Forest.

“I paid no attention, I only came to look at him. Honestly, just this and nothing more...

“Who told me to pay no attention? How could I not have paid attention? Could I do it? Impossible; I overestimated myself.

“I flew before his eyes, flying beside his ear and spiraling around him. I shouted loudly, ‘I am Ming Zhu! Five hundred years ago, I was your Ming Zhu! Do you recognize me?’

“He didn’t hear me, his heart only held tender sentiments for this girl. He said to her, ‘Ya, look at how lovely this butterfly is!’

“That girl coquettishly said, ‘Are you saying I’m not lovable?’

“He immediately tensed. Promptly, he explained, ‘No, no, you are the most beautiful and lovable person under the sun! Even this butterfly can’t compare with you!’

“I cried. I finally cried, and I still cry.

“——God told me I must not cry!

“I remembered a few things:

“That orange guqin... a beautiful melody... fiery red maple leaves...

“——I felt myself fade away, seemingly becoming weaker and weaker...

“I had changed into a strand of light smoke and entered through the end of the orange zither upon his knees!

“God’s voice echoed within my ear: ‘Shedding tears... you have changed into the thing you were just recalling... never to reincarnate...’

“I had become a zither soul. Within his hands was a zither with a zither soul. I frequently recalled the affair five hundred years ago in the Maple Forest. At that time, my mood was very excited, like the unstoppable waters of a waterfall; I also became as quiet and undisturbed as those days in God’s hand during the reincarnation cycle, with no desires or goals— I believe this mood of mine is expressed through the zither music.

“Oh, how I desired for him to understand this!

“Perhaps he had truly understood me.

“He abandoned the earthly realm, falling in love with the zither.

Chapter 24 – Zither of Divinity (IV)

“He traveled thousands of miles, reached Nanshan Millenium Tree, and boiled 49 medicinal plants over a warm fire for 81 days before extracting them. Drying them in the gentle sunlight for 108 days, he fetched the strings of the orange guqin—which were also the strings of my soul—and spent 3 years creating a new zither—Waterfall of Connecting Pearls.

“I became the soul of the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither.”

The orange realm faded away, the surroundings morphing back into reality. Ye Yin Zhu suddenly felt that his face was very wet. At this moment, he realized tears had long been streaming down his face.

Glistening tears dropped down onto the strings, shattering into countless little droplets that quietly rolled down. It was unknown who was crying, him or the zither.

Waterfall of Connecting Pearls, it was Waterfall of Connecting Pearls. Qin Shang had once spoken of this zither and only described the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither with a single line: ‘This is the best zither!’ That man, Qin Zhi, had the exact same name as the founder of the Zither Sect.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't know why the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither was here, but he knew that this zither and he will never part. She would be by his side forever; he would share her sorrow and grief.

Before he left the Desolate Jade Sea, Qin Shang had told Ye Yin Zhu, 'If you reach a point where you want to contend against the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda with your own strength, you need to find a Divine Zither.'

What was a Divine Zither? Naturally, it was a zither. In this era, only three zithers could be considered divine devices. Waterfall of Connecting Pearls, which held Lan Ming Zhu's soul, was one of them.

"Yin Zhu, what's going on?" Ferguson's deeply concerned voice rang out, awakening Ye Yin Zhu from his sadness. He discovered that he was tightly embracing the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls.

Ye Yin Zhu looked at Ferguson, Nesta, and Ma Liang. At this moment, Nesta had already put on a full suit of dark red armor. Its dazzling and beautiful design made his lofty figure appear even more majestic. The color of this armor matched his Blood Soul Spear well. Ma Liang had exchanged for a gray crystal magical robe clasp, and in his hand was a necklace made of unknown gems.

"Teacher, I want this zither. May I?" His expression held no desire, only a steady resolve.

Ferguson smiled slightly and said, "Of course. A good zither in the hands of an outstanding Divine Music mage is a blessing. I didn't even know that this treasury's collection had an aura zither."



Returning to the classroom, Ye Yin Zhu's mood still hadn't sobered from the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls' illusory story. He didn't know whether the zither soul genuinely existed or not, but that story was nevertheless very soft and poignant. Perhaps it was because his tears had fallen onto the strings of the zither soul, but even as the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls lay in his space ring, Ye Yin Zhu could still clearly sense it. Its strings and his heartstrings trembled together.

He rubbed the middle finger of his left hand against the topaz ring, where the

Waterfall of Connecting Pearls resided. Ye Yin Zhu already resolved to not place anything but the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls within it.

The lecturer standing atop the podium was a 40-year-old female teacher. Although Ye Yin Zhu didn't recognize her, she certainly knew the general of the Divine Music division. After a bit, he dazedly walked up to sit beside Lan Xi, not saying a single word as the teacher continued her lesson. Unfortunately, Ye Yin Zhu did not remember a single word from any of the classes on the first day.

"Yin Zhu, what's wrong?" Lan Xi quietly poked him, whispering softly.

"Eh?" Ye Yin Zhu suddenly woke from his daze with a start, his loud cry of surprise immediately causing the beautiful girls to laugh quietly. Lan Xi's shy face reddened. She lowered her head, not daring to look up at the teacher.

"Student Ye Yin Zhu, do you have a question?" The female teacher gazed at him and asked softly.

Ye Yin Zhu sat there, stunned. In the girls' eyes, this handsome yet stunned version of him was really cute.

"Teacher, can musical instruments have souls?"

"Of course. As a Divine Music mage, if we want to perform even more beautiful music, we need to understand the soul of the musical instrument. Maybe this is fictional, but I believe that even an ordinary musical instrument has a soul."

His bewildered gaze gradually cleared, and Ye Yin Zhu rose from his seat to respectfully bow towards the female teacher. "Thank you, teacher. I understand."

The magical loudspeaker luckily rang at this moment, signaling the end of class. The first day's classes had ended. The afternoon was a free cultivation period. The teaching style of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts was very relaxed. Since the students were capable of coming here to study, they also knew they had to invest in a great deal of effort. Of course, the Divine Music division, the division claimed to be the best, was naturally an exception.



Leaving the school building, Ye Yin Zhu exhaled, stretching his body. At this

moment, his mood had already returned to normal. The female teacher had sobered him up. All musical instruments had souls. The Waterfall of Connecting Pearls had one, and the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance also had one. As he had resonated with the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls' aura, he could hear her tale, thus indicating that he had gained her approval.

When Ye Yin Zhu returned to his dormitory, Sura had already come back. One must know that the Divine Music division's dormitories were extraordinarily close to the division's school building, while its distance from the Martial Arts Department was extraordinarily far.

"Sura, did you finish class early? How long has it been since you returned?"

"I rushed back to prepare a meal for you!" Sura excitedly exclaimed as he bustled in the kitchen, "Yin Zhu, I tested the speed amplification effect of the Eternal Substitute Puppet today. It's even better than I thought. My speed increased by at least 30%."

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, "Any magic item in the right hands can bring out the greatest power. You work so hard everyday to tidy the rooms, and you still want to prepare a meal for me to eat; I should pay you."

Sura giggled and said, "Pay me? Are you wealthy? Floating Orchid Pavilion's wages haven't been given out yet."

Ye Yin Zhu chuckled. Brilliant rays of light encompassed his hand as he withdrew the black dagger and grasped it in his hand. He handed it over to Sura. "How much of the costs will this cover?"

Staring at the dagger, Sura blanked out. He gripped the dishes tightly, immediately understanding that Ye Yin Zhu had specifically chosen something for him from the treasury earlier today. His hands scrubbed the dishes clean hard enough to bruise.

"This, this is..." The icy aura, the sinister edge, and the demonic ruby eyes, it lacked nothing, deeply attracting his interest. Sura trembled. He was somewhat unable to control himself.

"Angel's Sigh. This, is this actually Angel's Sigh?" Sura abruptly raised his head and stared at Ye Yin Zhu for some time. His eyes brimmed with shock.

“So as it turns out, it’s called Angel’s Sigh! I wouldn’t have been able to tell; it’s appearance is so fierce and vicious, yet it has such a pleasant name. Apparently, it’s pretty good. It’s no wonder teacher seemed distressed when I carried it and the large Amethyst Sword away.” Ye Yin Zhu spoke as if this was insignificant.

“Pleasant? Do you know that Angel’s Sigh also has another title?” Sura raised the dagger up and slashed it in the air, causing a beautiful arc to appear. A dark, icy aura assaulted his senses, striking Ye Yin Zhu with chills.

“What?”

“Cursed Blade.” Sura’s voice grew hushed. “Although it’s not a divine device, it is still a high grade soul device. Cursed Blade; it increases attack power against magical defense by 200%. Against physical defenses, it increases attack power by 105%. A completely silent blade, any dou qi poured into it will not release any rays of light.

“The reason why it’s called Cursed Blade is because any injury it inflicts will cause the recipient to bleed out and die if they are not healed by Light magic of Cyan rank or higher. Although this is not a divine device, merely a soul device, the assassin circles call it the Uncrowned King.”

“Haha, it seems that I chose a treasure. Sura, how much of the costs will this cover?” Ye Yin Zhu proudly asked.

Sura unhappily retorted, “To warriors and mages, Angel’s Sigh might be a pretty good weapon, but to assassins, it is considered to be a priceless treasure. You want to pay with this? It could buy a city full of slaves. You fool, always giving away things. Although it’s not a divine device, it is still a soul device. You truly are a boy loose with money.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s simple face broke out into a rare grin. “I’ve made a profit! I give this to you, and in exchange, you can tidy up after me and prepare meals for me for the rest of our lives. Anyway, this thing is useless to me.”

Chapter 25 – Level 8 Violet Ranked Beauties (I)

“You...” Sura’s ordinary cheeks flushed red as he stared at Ye Yin Zhu. For a moment, this imbecile had rendered him speechless. He realized his heart was violently beating, and his surroundings no longer seemed important. In his mind, there was only Ye Yin Zhu’s recent words.

“Hey, come back to reality. The things you have in your pot is becoming paste.” Ye Yin Zhu poked Sura’s forehead.

“Ah— —! My pork chops!” Sura cried out in alarm. He grabbed the Angel’s Sigh and rushed back to the kitchen. He hurriedly yelled, “Yin Zhu, I accept this gift. But, you can’t make me wait upon you for a lifetime. We are friends. You’re mine, and I’m yours.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. “As you wish. In any case, I will give you money no matter what when you ask.” In fact, he didn’t even have a lot of money on him as Sura held it all. His body was best described as penniless.



Every day, the weather was cold, and only the midday sun’s bright and beautiful rays could produce a feeling of warmth. Ye Yin Zhu and Sura didn’t have classes in the afternoon, so they had both returned home to eat together. They then walked towards Milan City, as they hadn’t gone to Floating Orchid Pavilion for two days. Since the competition was over, they could now return to work.

“Yin Zhu, you know what? For the past few days you’ve been missing, I don’t even know how many guests questioned us waiters.” Sura smiled as he spoke up.

Ye Yin Zhu obtusely asked, “What did they ask about?”

“Dummy, they’re naturally asking why you haven’t been coming. We can only say you requested a leave of absence. I didn’t expect you to be so popular. Your zither playing is indeed excellent. Boss Anya fortunately ordered all of the waiters to not reveal that you are a student at the Milan Institution. Otherwise, your peace at the institution would have vanished. From my observations,

despite Floating Orchid Pavilion's isolated location and small number of tea-drinking clientele, each client has a unique identity. Moreover, some are even great nobles."

"Sura, you are really wise. It seems as if there is nothing you don't know." Ye Yin Zhu somewhat enviously glanced at Sura.

Sura proudly said, "Of course. And you definitely resemble a little dummy."

"Little? I am taller than you!" Ye Yin Zhu was nearly a head taller than Sura.

"What does height have to do with this? You should call me Teacher Sura. Haven't I taught you a multitude of things?"

Ye Yin Zhu replied in surprise, "Our ages are similar, so how can you be called Teacher? Sura, don't tell me that you aren't as young as you appear to be..."

"You?! You are truly infuriating. You don't even understand what is done to become a teacher!"

"Huh?"

Sura remained silent.



When the two of them arrived at Floating Orchid Pavilion, the business had yet to open. Walking inside, they came across Dida. Since they began working here, regardless of whether it was Sura or Ye Yin Zhu, both of them were well-received. Ye Yin Zhu's popularity was naturally because of his excellent zither playing, while Sura was praised for his quick work pace. Moreover, his movements were very efficient, as the other servers had reported to him. Perhaps because the waiters' wages were all pretty good, there was hardly any conflicts breaking out among them.

"Yin Zhu, you came. If you hadn't come, I would have gone deaf from all the questions from our clients." As Dida teased Ye Yin Zhu, he gestured for the two of them to come in.

Sura glanced at Ye Yin Zhu and said, "I'm going to go change into my work clothes; you head on up. I'll deliver tea to you in a moment."

"Okay," Ye Yin Zhu replied. He accompanied Dida upstairs, walking over to the

special area he performed in every time.

“Elder Brother Dida, I truly feel apologetic. These past two days, school has occupied my time, that’s why I—”

Dida smiled and interrupted him. “It’s nothing. Boss said that even if you are busy and can’t come, there’s no need to worry about this place. Anyway, your daily wages have been calculated. It seems the Boss really likes your zither music; every time you play, Boss will sit at the top of the stairs to the third floor and gaze down at you alone for three hours. Of course, we all like your zither music. It is an absolutely intoxicating pleasure.”

As Dida spoke, Ye Yin Zhu arrived at his special performance area. When he settled in, Dida unfurled the muslin curtains, making it so that people would be unable to see him from the outside. Ye Yin Zhu liked this very much because it prevented him from being interrupted during his playing. Behind him was the humongous ancient tree trunk. Whenever he sat here, it seemed as if he could sense its heartbeat. That fresh, clean atmosphere and amiable feeling completely invigorated his body. As a result, his ability to bring out his zither music increased.

The noisy clamor outside trickled in; Floating Orchid Pavilion had already begun business. At this moment, the muslin curtain was disturbed as Sura’s head popped in from the outside.

“Here, you should drink your tea first. Don’t work so hard. Play a song and then take a break. You always play for the entire three hours. Don’t your hands become tired?” Sura spoke with deep concern as he placed the teapot and teacup beside him before pouring a cup for Yin Zhu.

The tea was a light shade of sparkling, translucent blue. A faint fragrance wafted up, penetrating deeply into his heart.

“Sura, what is today’s tea? This is different from the tea before.” Ye Yin Zhu drank a mouthful. The tea was somewhat bitter, but once the bitterness passed, there was a sweet aftertaste that left a savory imprint on his lips and teeth.

Sura’s face reddened, and he lowered his head, not looking at Ye Yin Zhu. “This is Forget-Me-Not, a naturally pure wildflower. It is also offered as a beverage in the imperial palace as it can nourish and repair the kidney, raise the vitality of

one's blood, and clear the heart and lungs. It also improves the liver and eyes and nourishes the skin. Drink, it's good for you. This tea is the priciest among the selections offered here. I secretly stole you a cup."

"Forget-Me-Not, Forget-Me-Not; this name is really meaningful. Sura, you should never be afraid that I will forget you. How can I? We are good brothers. Only, your memory is fantastic. We haven't been working here for long, yet you are quickly becoming an expert of scented tea." After he said this, he took another drink, exclaiming in admiration once more.

Sura replaced the curtain and carried the tray away, no longer willing to stay and allow Ye Yin Zhu to see his scarlet face. Lightly pressing his hand against his chest, he felt the ferocity of his beating heart. Sura darkly asked himself, 'What is going on? Why did I coincidentally choose this scented tea brand?'

Drinking the cup of tea, Ye Yin Zhu began his afternoon performance. He was still using the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance Zither, and a gloomy, poignant zither song pouring out from beneath his eight fingers. Once everyone began to hear him play, they all felt confused. Today's zither music seemed to have a few changes compared to last time. The innocence seemed to have lessened significantly, as if it had matured. What they didn't know, however, was that this was the outcome of the evolution from the Pure Zither Heart to the Courageous Zither Heart.

Ye Yin Zhu continued to play as always. Whenever he began playing, he immersed himself in the musical pulse, his performance unceasing. Everyone was completely bewitched by the zither music. The Zither Heart Realm advancement, as well as the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls' emotional stimulation earlier today, made his zither music become more pleasant to listen to and more effective in drawing others under its spell.

Even without a single trace of magic, every client outside listened reverently, intoxicated. No one even spoke; only the sounds of clinking cups could be heard sporadically. Whenever someone voiced a sound, everyone else will immediately glare at the disturber. Floating Orchid Pavilion's elegance had virtually improved a whole rank because of Ye Yin Zhu's arrival.

“Anya. What are you doing here?” Everyone clearly heard a gentle voice suddenly echo from the first floor of Floating Orchid Pavilion.

This voice appeared to be in possession of an unusual enunciation. When it rang out, Ye Yin Zhu suddenly felt his mind dull, his zither music screeching to a sudden halt. The song << Solitary Orchid >> was cut short.

The guests’ accusing gazes were aimed towards the first floor, but they couldn’t voice any complaints. This was because they didn’t want to trouble the refined woman who had appeared. She was a gorgeous woman with a great deal of similarity with Anya. Her age couldn’t be discerned from her face alone, as she had the purity of a girl and the loveliness of a woman. Her appearance was remarkably similar to Anya. While she didn’t have Anya’s dignified aura, her beauty actually being rather inferior to Anya, she actually emitted a noble air, even more so than Anya.

Even if Floating Orchid Pavilion’s guests were nobility, when they looked at her at this moment, no one was able to rebuke her because her nobility, beauty, and dignified appearance had shocked them. A light green dress clung to the contours of her beautiful body, which was extremely enticing. By no means did her nobility and beauty within her light green eyes vanish, but they did hold a trace of iciness.

After she had spoken, she already began ascending the flight of stairs. Even though the waiters wanted to bar her passage, an intangible force stopped them. They simply couldn’t approach her. When she walked up the stairs from the first floor to the second, she stopped at the top and nodded slightly towards Ye Yin Zhu’s area. She apologetically said, “I am truly sorry to have disturbed your performance, but I have a truly urgent matter I need to speak of with Anya.”

“It doesn’t matter.” Ye Yin Zhu’s hands pressed down on the strings. Although the interruption of his performance made him feel very uneasy, he was naturally compassionate. The party at fault had already admitted her error, so he didn’t think much of it. This was the first time the majority of the guests heard him

speak, and many were astonished that the Floating Orchid Pavilion's zitherist was actually so young.

Anya's frigid voice echoed from above. "What are you doing here? You are not welcome. Leave." When Ye Yin Zhu had begun to play, she had already appeared at the top of the third story stairs. Quietly sitting there, she would drink her favorite tea—Jade Beauty—and listen to Ye Yin Zhu's zither music. To her, this was the most pleasurable time of her day.

"Anya, are you telling me there is no possibility of us reconciling?" As she spoke, the woman continued to walk up the stairs. Anya also gradually descended down. These two stunning beauties were equally matched in beauty. As the two of them gradually approached one another, both of their distances from Ye Yin Zhu's area decreased.

"Dida," Anya called out suddenly.

"Mistress." Dida bowed from the first floor.

Anya indifferently said, "Please have everyone leave. All of today's consumptions will be on me."

"Understood, Mistress," Dida deferentially promised. He and the rest of the waiters immediately began conveying Anya's declaration to the guests.

Anya could naturally be heard by everyone, so no one issued a complaint. Each body rose to leave. Although their faces held reluctance, they still all left one after another.

Every day, that old horse was the last to leave. He glanced at Anya and the woman who were glaring at each other in Ye Yin Zhu's area and asked, "Miss Anya, do you need any help?"

Anya furrowed her brows. "There is no need. You can leave."

The old horse sighed lightly and glanced deeply at Anya, somewhat helplessly shaking his head before turning around to leave.

At this moment, only Ye Yin Zhu, the waiters, Anya, and that woman remained in Floating Orchid Pavilion.

"Angel, why did you come look for me? Any relationship between us has long

been severed. Don't tell me that even though I came to the Milan Empire, you don't want to let me go?" Anya's gaze became icier. Because their distance from one another wasn't large, Ye Yin Zhu could see both of their faces and expressions despite the muslin curtain. At this moment, the gentle and soft Anya appeared to be having difficulty keeping her temper, her icy aura becoming frightening.

Angel turned to the side and looked at the humongous ancient tree trunk. "Are we really nothing to one another? Regardless of what happened that time, we are blood sisters. This fact cannot be changed. Right? My little sister."

"Who is your little sister? You are undeserving," Anya scolded, an immense, incorporeal pressure radiating off of her body.

Ye Yin Zhu had already advanced from the Pure Zither Heart to the Courageous Zither Heart. He wore the Divine Celestial Protection Robe, and on his chest was a Pure Brightness Spirit Guardian amulet that held Spiritual Magic. At this very moment, however, when Anya suddenly released that immense, powerful, wrathful pressure, it left him unable to breathe. His body was completely rigid, and it was as though all of his life force within his body had been completely locked away.

All of her surroundings seemed to sink because of Anya's immense pressure. That painful feeling was indescribable. And now, Ye Yin Zhu had to bear it. The pressure he felt was merely the fringe.

Angel appeared to not be affected by Anya's tremendous aura. Her body didn't tremble in the slightest because of Anya's powerful pressure. "Little sister, your strength has improved once again. It seems that your cultivation wasn't affected by your decision to leave home. You should know why I came. Hand over the items, and I will never disturb you again."

Angel and Anya's dual pressure made Ye Yin Zhu feel as if his body was being smashed to pieces. Fortunately, the life-saving warmth appeared once more and helped prevent him from collapsing. He couldn't help but become overwhelmed with shock as he never imagined Elder Sister Anya's strength to be like this. And this was merely the two of them releasing their aura!

"You're dreaming. Angel, let's not fight here. Let's go outside of the city."

Anya's expression became even more unsightly. Her eyes exuded anger, but she could seemingly feel Ye Yin Zhu's suffering beneath both of their powerful pressures. She looked somewhat worriedly at the muslin curtain area.

Angel's eyes flashed. She smiled, saying, "Good idea! Let's go." The tremendous aura vanished abruptly. She resembled a Bodhisattva for a split second before the mirage flashed away. Behind the muslin curtain, Ye Yin Zhu felt his whole body tense. Without dou qi or magic, that split second had completely suppressed him. Immediately following, he felt as if he was soaring through the clouds, which confused him.

Before his eyes was a magnificently bright sky. Angel had grabbed him and flown out of Floating Orchid Pavilion. Right, they were flying. As he was taken, the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance had fallen off his knees, but it didn't drop off the platform. As such, it didn't break.

"Put him down! This matter is between the two of us; he has no part in it," Anya's voice echoed out, filled with even more anger as she flew behind them. Yes, she was also flying.

"Yin Zhu——." Sura's cry gradually became distant, and Ye Yin Zhu could only watch as his surroundings disappeared like a bolt of lightning, a dream-like fantasy.

Although Ye Yin Zhu couldn't move, his brain could still reflect over this. 'Flying, they can fly? Even my two grandfathers, who have both reached Violet Rank, are unable to soar through the sky. Qin Shang once told me that only Wind mages could rely on their magic to fly short distances. Are these two Wind mages? Why is their magical flying speed so quick?'

At this moment, his mind brimmed with questions, with no anxiousness at all.

The surrounding scenery flashed by like lightning, preventing Ye Yin Zhu from seeing it clearly. He could only smell the faint delicate fragrance clinging to Angel's body. The fragrance was very enthralling; it appeared to be purely natural as well. She was currently emitting a dark, icy aura, however, that made her body appear as though it personified mass destruction.

Although Angel’s strength could terrify others, her body was very soft. Unfortunately, Ye Yin Zhu’s current position was highly uncomfortable.

After a short while, Angel suddenly stopped. Her beautiful figure twirled in mid-air and descended to the ground. The environment around them was a forest, something Ye Yin Zhu was certain of. They were at least no longer in Milan City. As for this place, he didn’t recognize it.

Angel clasped a hand on Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder, glancing at Anya as she gently fell down to the floor with them. She commented, “Don’t rush so quickly into action! Otherwise... I might not be able to guarantee your little lover’s safety.”

“He is not my lover; he’s merely my employee. Release him.” Anya coldly glared at Angel.

Angel laughed lightly. “He’s really not? When he plays, though, I saw a look of unprecedented devotion on your face. Your expression betrays you.”

Anya’s eyes flashed with severity. “What nonsense are you talking about? How can a relationship between him and I be possible? Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten how old we are compared to humans?”

Angel said, “I certainly haven’t forgotten, but even if our ages are high, we are equivalent to a 30-year-old or so human. We are still awfully young. Even if your little lover becomes old, it is unlikely we will change greatly, no?”

“We humans? Don’t tell me... that you aren’t human?” Ye Yin Zhu inquisitively asked. He could now speak, but only that.

The expression on Angel’s face was cold, and she paid no attention to Ye Yin Zhu as she said to Anya, “I will give you one last chance. Hand over those items, and I will return your little lover to you, never to disturb your life from now on. If not, I will kill him and fight you for them.”

“No, I absolutely cannot give you those items. You don’t deserve them,” Anya hatefully said. At this moment, she seemed to be recalling painful memories. The grace on her beautiful, charming face vanished. Her icy aura seemed to freeze

the atmosphere.

“So, I can only kill him then.” As she spoke, Angel tightened the hand holding Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder, causing him to nearly succumb to that crazy strength. What appeared to be dou qi and some special magical energy rushed into Ye Yin Zhu’s body, seemingly ripping his body to shreds.

“Don’t!” Anya involuntarily cried out, rapidly throwing herself forward as fast as lightning.

Angel didn’t actually intend to kill Ye Yin Zhu, so her hand relaxed slightly, lessening her strength a bit. Ye Yin Zhu was then sent flying back, dodging Anya’s attack.

Scorching streams of air emitted from all of the bones in his limbs. An acute pain pierced his shoulder, which was seemingly the origin of this heat. As a surging warmth circulating through him, Ye Yin Zhu cried out as his black eyes became deep violet in a flash. Angel felt her hand slip as Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder suddenly became incomparably hard and slippery. The Divine Celestial Protection Robe burst forth, filled with an elastic power, causing that special aura-filled hand of hers to bounce off of Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder.

“Yi!” Angel cried out. Not waiting for her to react, Anya pounced forward with all her strength. Both of their hands made contact, causing an explosion that made the both of them recoil. The out-of-luck Ye Yin Zhu was luckily not at the center of their collision. As a result of the aftershock of their collision, a powerful earthquake rumbled into being.

Falling gently to the ground, Angel looked at her hand suspiciously. She hadn’t expected Ye Yin Zhu to actually be capable of escaping her grasp.

The Divine Celestial Protection failed when he was flying, but when his spiritual force was liberated, he could finally bring out its might. With the Divine Celestial Protection releasing milky white rays of light to protect him, he had little injuries after being thrown away, almost knocking over several trees in the process. In the end, only his shoulders ached a little. Angel had injected energy into his body, so it was continuously wreaking havoc within him. Fortunately the indescribable warmth inside his body unceasingly rushed forth and gradually dispersed that destructive force.

Subconsciously picking at the Divine Celestial Protection cloth on his shoulder, he took a glance and was amazed to discover there was actually a layer of violet crystal over it. At this moment, the violet crystal's color was gradually dulling, slowly integrating with his body.

Anya shakily flew down to the ground. Without a pause or an opportunity to catch her breath, she pounced forward once more. Her body transformed into seven silhouettes in mid-air, each figure attacking Angel from a different direction. Her body unexpectedly radiated pure violet rays of light. Violet Rank. That's right; Anya was Violet Ranked. Not only that, but her body's violet radiance was very deep.

Angel groaned. "Still not going to say he's your little lover? So desperate, are you not afraid I'll harm him? You don't want to force my hand— because I will retaliate." She formed a circle with her hands above her chest. A violet ball of liquid formed from the thick substances emitting from her body. She was actually using violet elemental energy, its color as deep as Anya's. There clearly wasn't much of a difference between their strengths.

If Ferguson were here, he would have been shocked to discover that these two beautiful, young women unexpectedly possessed Violet Rank Level 8 strength. Yes, this was Violet Rank Level 8.

"Yin Zhu." In the depths of his soul, a pulling sensation echoed forth. Ye Yin Zhu clearly felt his body being dragged away from the fight into another dimension. Everything before him became blurred. His surroundings were empty as what appeared to be countless shadows flitted past him.

Anya and Angel's collision of energy created an astonishing scene as, in a flash, Ye Yin Zhu's body flew into the distance, gradually fading away until he completely disappeared.

His surroundings once again became clear, and he realized he had arrived in an unfamiliar region. The air was very cold, significantly colder than where he was before. There was no forest, only overgrown hills. In the distance, he could see remnants of snow. He was currently on top of a small hill, but he was not here alone; there was someone here that Ye Yin Zhu was dear to and highly familiar with.

“Zi, where am I?” Ye Yin Zhu looked pleasantly at the tall figure standing to the side. The previously empty domain that left him out of sorts had already gone up in smoke.

Zi gazed at Ye Yin Zhu, his profound and calm gaze holding a bit of rebuke. “This is the Northern Wasteland. Yin Zhu, why didn’t you summon me when you came across a threat? Yesterday and today this has happened. Are you no longer my brother?”

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu suddenly saw the light. It turned out Zi could sense when he was in danger through the Equal Life Contract, so he summoned him here. He didn’t know, but it was rather fortunate. Back at the forest, the two Violet Rank Level 8 peak experts were battling, and a stray bit of power was already enough to harm him. If he didn’t die, he would certainly be seriously hurt. Furthermore, he was Angel’s target.

“No, Zi. We are undoubtedly brothers. Yesterday, I was certain I could respond to the danger, so I didn’t summon you. And earlier, everything happened so rapidly. I didn’t even see...” As he trailed off, Ye Yin Zhu scratched his head with some embarrassment.

Zi helplessly said, “Yin Zhu, you need to bear this in mind. Regardless of what happens, if you are in danger, you must summon me immediately. There is no need to worry at all. Fortunately, this time you weren’t fighting. Otherwise, even if I wanted to summon you to save you, it would have been impossible.”

“Zi, don’t say things like this. I can stay here for at least an hour. Here, I prepared a gift for you. I had planned to summon you this evening to give it to you.”

Chapter 25 – Level 8 Violet Ranked Beauties (IV)

Zi creased his brow. “Gift? I don’t need a gift.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. “Although I don’t know if you can use it, I feel you will definitely like it. Only, you need to be careful! It is very big.” As he said this, he raised his left hand. His space ring flashed with brilliant rays of light as an

incomparably large dark-blue radiance materialized before the two of them.

An immense bulk slowly toppled over, and Ye Yin Zhu cried out in alarm. Zi stepped forward and used both hands to forcibly hold up the object that was on the verge of falling over, slowly placing it on the ground.

Zi's gaze didn't separate from it. Ye Yin Zhu had materialized a sword from his space ring, the very same large Amethyst Sword he had obtained from the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts treasury.

Ye Yin Zhu couldn't conceal his shock. Although he knew Zi's strength was tremendous, he didn't anticipate Zi being able to hold this sword with only his two hands and still be able to steadily place it on the ground. Although it appeared to require some strenuous effort, he had still accomplished it in the end. When he'd first found this sword, Ye Yin Zhu had tried to move it, yet it wouldn't budge at all, even with dou qi .

"Amethyst, this is actually Amethyst." Zi's voice was full of excitement. Both his hands slowly caressed the large Amethyst Sword's blade. His resolved eyes were glistening with tears, and his body was even trembling.

"Zi, are you alright? Unfortunately, it's truly humongous. I remember when you bought that sword from last time." As he said this, Ye Yin Zhu couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed. Although Amethyst was a sword, it was also excessively heavy. Even though Zi could be considered tall for a human, in front of Amethyst he was miniscule. His palm wasn't even able to completely grasp the sword hilt.

"Yin Zhu, thank you." Zi stood up, turning around to face Ye Yin Zhu. Yin Zhu was amazed to discover two trails of tears on Zi's face.

Zi cried. Zi actually cried because of the sword.

"Zi, what's wrong?"

Zi shook his head, his ice-cold face unexpectedly displaying a trace of a smile. "I am extremely happy. Yin Zhu, this sword is very important to me, but I can't tell you why. How did you get it?"

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, "Of course. I obtained it when I became the champion of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts's Freshman

Competition. This is one of my prizes. When I saw it in the treasury, I immediately felt it was very peculiar. In particular, when I touched the blade, I could feel its prestige and familiarity. Its decorative design had then changed, forming the word, 'Amethyst.' Others were unable to sense anything like this. Upon seeing it, I thought of you for some unknown reason. Thus, I picked it with the intention of gifting it to you. It's a pity I only have the space ring Elder Sister Anya gave me. This is a humongous sword, how are you going to hold it?"

Zi smiled. This time, he looked up at the sky and smiled. It seemed like all the pent-up frustrations in his heart had been completely resolved. He somewhat crazily shouted towards the sky, "The Will of the Heavens! It is certainly the Will of the Heavens that has delivered the Amethyst Sword to my side. Yin Zhu, do you know why you felt a familiar feeling when you touched it? It's because you have my aura. Due to the Equal Life Contract, you have my power."

Ye Yin Zhu suddenly understood. "So you're saying that my recent increase in strength and the violet crystal that appeared on my shoulder just a few moments ago both originate from your power? Zi, can you tell me the history of this sword? I know you have many secrets. Of course, if it is inconvenient to speak of, then forget it."

Zi shook his head and said, "The changes occurring in your body is indeed because of our contract. Similarly, I also obtained benefits from you. My power raised your defense and strength and, well, some other things you can't know of.

"I can tell you, however, that this Amethyst Sword belonged to my deceased grandfather. It had been lost for many years. You have found it and gifted it to me; you are my benefactor. Also..." He broke off his speech and reached out to grasp Ye Yin Zhu's shoulder. He said seriously, "Yin Zhu, I know you have a lot of questions you want to ask me. Wait until you enter the Violet Rank; then, I will tell you everything. You need to know that I am your brother. We are brothers for all of eternity, satisfied?"

In the end, Zi didn't explain the history of the Amethyst Sword. Zi was excited upon gaining the large Amethyst Sword, which already made him content. He looked like Sura when he obtained the Eternal Substitute Puppet as well as Angel's Sigh.

Zi took large strides towards the large Amethyst Sword's transient blade. Extending his right hand, he slashed his palm against the edge of the blade. Blood immediately flowed down. Zi's gaze was completely scorching. As though he was unaware of the pain, he caressed the large Amethyst Sword's decorative design with his palm. The changes began at the decorative design as he slowly stroked along the veined pattern, allowing his bloody hand to entirely taint the decorative design.

Ye Yin Zhu clearly saw the violet hue of Zi's dripping blood.

"Zi, your blood is flowing."

"That's not important." Zi still continued his actions, his gaze becoming very dedicated. The previous icy expression had become a burning fire upon seeing the large Amethyst Sword.

The large Amethyst Sword was humongous, yet Zi was meticulously painting it with his blood, not letting any of it drip outside of the veined pattern. His faint violet blood blended with the sword blade's veined pattern, which was actually being absorbed by the blade. The dark-blue color of the large Amethyst Sword began to change gradually. Bright violet light slowly emerged from the sword blade, and the domineering feeling Ye Yin Zhu once sensed appeared again. Not only that, it became even clearer.

As his blood drained out, Zi's complexion waned more and more, but his expression was extremely focused. So even though Ye Yin Zhu asked him to stop continuing several times, he was rebuffed.

When that faint violet blood finally covered the last of the veins, the large Amethyst Sword at last exposed its true colors. The humongous sword blade seemed to be a chunk of sculpted amethyst crystal with a penetrating violet light within that brimmed with murderous spirit and violet tyranny. Sunlight shone down on the circulating violet light. At this very moment, although it laid on the ground and seemed to become the center of the world.

Zi was conspicuously weak. This was the first time Ye Yin Zhu had seen him so weak. He even staggered when he stood up. Ye Yin Zhu took the initiative and assisted him in standing. At this very moment, however, Ye Yin Zhu saw that the condition of Zi's body and Zi's dazzlingly bright eyes were as different as night

and day.

Zi recited a deep incantation, the intonation very strange. Profound yet simple, it wasn't any language Ye Yin Zhu recognized. It sounded very extraordinary. Zi's intonation was very harmonious and beautiful, and a layer of violet light emitted from Zi's body. Gracefully circulating above the large Amethyst Sword, it was just like the bond between he and Zi that allowed them to communicate mentally.

Meanwhile, Zi's chanting became increasingly rushed. The violet light he emitted became richer and more powerful, and a bizarre scene appeared. The incomparably heavy and originally durable large Amethyst Sword unexpectedly seemed indistinct. It suddenly transformed into a ball of energy and traveled along the connection of light to Zi, unexpectedly merging bit by bit into Zi's body.

Chapter 26 – Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither’s Power (I)

The intense violet light brought an incomparably tyrannical and domineering air, yet Yin Zhu wasn’t at all affected. This was most likely because of the Equal Life Contract between he and Zi. At this moment, he could clearly sense Zi’s power becoming increasingly formidable. The exceedingly and extraordinary elemental aura that accompanied the large Amethyst Sword produced violet rays of light that frenziedly rushed into his body.

Zi’s poor health due to the large amount of blood he’d poured into the large Amethyst Sword gradually disappeared. His eyes became increasingly bright and incisive. His skeleton began to unceasingly ring out with tooth-aching noises. Crack. Although his body hadn’t enlarged, that violet energy’s effects began to visibly appear in Zi’s body.

The scorching stream of air that had resided in his belly since childhood rose, causing Ye Yin Zhu to subconsciously release Zi’s hand. This scorching stream of air became increasingly rich and powerful. He was amazed to discover that his dou qi had unexpectedly reacted to this warmth and crazily began circulating, as crazy as the insatiable appetite of a man dying of hunger during his sudden encounter of a grand and lavish buffet.

Yellow Bamboo Level 2 Dou Qi; this warmth unceasingly worked to enhance his dou qi. The rapid speed of improvement left Ye Yin Zhu greatly astonished. In merely a few moments, he had already broken through to Yellow Bamboo Level 3 and was well on his way to Level 4.

Generally speaking, Bamboo Dou Qi cultivation was completely different from other dou qi cultivations. Without a great deal of effort, an advancement was unlikely to happen. Not long ago, he had advanced from Level 1 to Level 2 because of the Equal Life Contract between him and Zi. To unexpectedly advance this much in such a short period of time, Ye Yin Zhu had never imagined it to be possible. At the same time, he discovered further changes occurring in his body because of the heat’s emergence. Like Zi, his bones began to unceasingly ring out. Crack. A layer of violet energy appeared across the surface of his skin, resembling a lustrous, glossy crystal as it gradually condensed.

His surroundings gradually became fuzzy. The warmth circulating throughout his body brought forth an incomparably comfortable and beautiful feeling. Ye Yin Zhu didn't move as he faintly realized that Zi's advancement had continuously benefitted his own cultivation.

The mass of the immense Amethyst Sword started to gradually reduce as the violet light in their bodies increased in richness and power. This was especially evident for Zi. Along with the violet light, a clear crystallization appeared on the surface of his skin, resembling armor. His body seemed to have grown a bit as it seemed to frantically absorb that biological energy. Without a slightest complication, he continuously improved.

"Yin Zhu, I need to enter hibernation. Go home, I need to take care of myself." Zi's deep voice echoed throughout Ye Yin Zhu's dazed mind.

Ye Yin Zhu also didn't know how much time had passed until he'd woken up from his trance. His own violet stream of air had already vanished completely, and everything had returned to normal. At this moment, he realized Zi had disappeared for some unknown time with the conclusion of the summoning. He had returned to the forest where Angel and Anya were battling.

Staring down at his hands, he felt his improvement despite the lack of appropriate timing. It wasn't just his dou qi that had improved, but his physical body's strength had as well. Every part of his body seemed to burst with explosive power.

With a single thought, Yellow Bamboo Dou Qi began circulating throughout his body, the hue significantly richer than before. From the color to his internal judgement of the dou qi's strength, Ye Yin Zhu realized that he had leapt past Level 3 and Level 4 and directly entered the realm of Yellow Bamboo Level 5. This kind of advancement speed was monstrous. According to the Rainbow Ranking System, wouldn't this mean he'd reached the equivalent of Intermediate Level Cyan Rank? That was a Heaven Warrior! An Intermediate Heaven Warrior, the dou qi disparity between he and his father wasn't very large now. If his cultivation speed from before had been followed, then it would have been impossible to reach this level in under five years.

Ye Yin Zhu's wonder didn't continue for very long. Before his eyes was a sight

that startled him. The forest that had previously surrounded him was no longer there; all that remained were broken branches and ruined leaves in a disarrayed mess. The elemental energy in the air was extremely unstable.

“Anya, concede. Your magic is no match for me. After all, Milan is not the Elven Forest. The elements are naturally sparser here, so you will never be able to overtake me. Hand over the items, and I will not take your life for the sake of the sisterly feelings I have for you.”

Angel’s voice rang from close by. Ye Yin Zhu’s heart was moved as he hurriedly faced the direction in which the voice had come from and secretly observed.

Before his eyes was a scene that left him gobsmacked. With a size of over 100 meters, an immense, 10 meter deep hole had appeared unknowingly. The magical elements in the air were in complete chaos. Angel was now standing at the very edge of the hole, gazing at Anya on the other side. The violet rays of light engulfing both of their bodies had become significantly darker. Anya’s complexion in particular had become paler.

‘No way, this is the aftermath of their fight? This is too terrifying.’ Ye Yin Zhu felt a chill travel down his spine. Although he’d previously thought Anya’s strength was pretty good, he didn’t expect her to be this powerful.

“Angel, even if you kill me, I won’t hand over the items to you. Don’t forget—although your strength is greater than mine, your desire to kill me will inevitably come with a high cost. I think that after fighting for so long, we have already fathered the attention of the Milan Empire. In a short while, the Imperial Mages of the Milan Empire will arrive here shortly, and, like last time, you will want to leave this place.” Anya coldly glared at Angel, not cowering before her opponent’s threat in the slightest.

Angel snorted coldly. “So you’re saying you refuse.”

Anya didn’t even reply, only glaring coldly at her opponent.

Angel suddenly smiled, her lovely appearance brightening which left Ye Yin Zhu helplessly dumbstruck. “Anya, I had just severely wounded your alicorn. Without the Elven Forest’s Elixir of Life, it will undoubtedly die. It had followed you for 200 years. Don’t tell me you want to see it die? I can exchange the Elixir of Life with you for the items. How about that?”

Anya’s eyes clearly dilated. “Just now, you struck it using Dark Magic? You are truly despicable.”

Angel laughed, saying, “So what? My personal motto is to obtain my goal by hook or by crook. Otherwise, the Elf Queen should have been you and not me. Little Sister, you cannot defeat me. Neither in the past nor in the present.”

“You...”

Hearing the title ‘Elf Queen,’ Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t help his widening eyes as his body subconsciously jolted, emitting a slight vibration.

“Who’s there?” Anya and Angel’s icy, severe gazes turned towards Ye Yin Zhu.

An immense pressure struck him, and it was similar in strength to what he’d felt from before when Zi summoned him. Fortunately, he and Zi had gained several benefits from the large Amethyst Sword. His physical strength and dou qi had improved significantly. This immediately prevented him from making a fool of himself.

“Elder Sister Anya, it’s me.” No longer seeing a need to hide, Ye Yin Zhu emerged from the remnants of the forest.

“Yin Zhu, are you alright?” Anya looked him over, her beautiful eyes immediately exuding a trace of pleasant surprise. She hastily redirected her pressure towards Angel, making Yin Zhu’s whole body relax. The suffocating restriction had disappeared immediately.

“Oh, your little lover returned. That was transportation magic just now. I didn’t expect him to be a Spatial Domain mage. He is extremely weak though. Even with him by your side, you still have no chance.”

Chapter 26 – Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither’s Power (II)



Angel disdainfully looked at Ye Yin Zhu, and Yin Zhu now realized that despite the smile on her face, her eyes had been ice-cold all along. They inflicted a frightening, deathly stillness that made his whole body uncontrollably tremble.

Violet Rank Level 8! On this entire continent, both of them could be said to be experts at the absolute peak. Regardless of Ye Yin Zhu’s previous Yellow Bamboo

Level 2 and his current Yellow Bamboo Level 5, confronting a super-powerful Violet Rank Level 8 expert then and now would be the same.

Perhaps because she saw that Ye Yin Zhu was alright, Anya's imposing manner grew extensively. Her body flashed, leaping off the edge of the gigantic hole to pounce at Angel on the other side. She didn't want to give Angel another chance to act against Ye Yin Zhu. As she flew towards Angel, she shouted tenderly, "Yin Zhu, run away! Head to the south and return to the institution!"

The two streaks of violet light suddenly collided. Ye Yin Zhu could only watch on as the two phantoms appeared to use all of their magic and dou qi. The frantic energy undulations exuded by the two women's collision led to an explosion at the center that devastated the surrounding environment. That tremendously destructive energy seemed to tear the whole world asunder.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't run away, instead sitting down. Making him abandon Anya... it was just impossible for him to leave by himself. In his mind, he basically was unable to fight or retreat. He knew of the strength of Anya's opponent though, yet he also unconditionally couldn't abandon Anya and leave. Furthermore, Anya's strength was currently inferior to Angel's.

The faintly distressed, dazzlingly beautiful orange Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither quietly appeared above Ye Yin Zhu's knees.

Even if this wasn't the first time he had seen it, looking at the pleasing sight touched Ye Yin Zhu's heart once more.

Both his hands stroked the strings as he naturally discarded the outside world. This zither soul's strings were supple and strong, glistening with gem-like luster. Seven identical strings of spiritual energy flowed deep into Ye Yin Zhu's heart—the strings being the sorrow of the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls.

Eight fingers sorrowfully plucked out a rhythm, candid and clear just like the chiming of the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither notes as they echoed out. Lacking the gloominess it previously held, it currently contained a clarity with its distant bell-like chimes. It seemed as though it really were a waterfall, yet the music was, in truth, full of a majestic air similar to that of an imposing spire.

Each string, each zither note, felt entirely different when coming from the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither. It no longer made people listen attentively

to the music; the zither notes instead echoed deep into their hearts.

Ye Yin Zhu played the song << High Mountains and Running Water >>. This zither song was one he had previously practiced for an awfully long time. Yet, no matter how hard he tried, he was never able to play << High Mountains and Running Water >> to perfection. He could now accomplish this, and it wasn't because of his Zither Heart Realm advancement, but because of the zither; above his knees was the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither.

It allowed him to bring << High Mountains and Running Water >> to the realm of perfection, and this was all because of the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither.

The Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither, a Divine ranked zither, and this zither song << High Mountains and Running Water >>.

Benevolent music of the mountains, the sage music of the water; this was the true essence of the song, << High Mountains and Running Water >>.

A layer of yellow magic quietly entered the music. With Ye Yin Zhu as the center, it continuously expanded and enveloped the land.

The Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither was extremely remarkable. Its tone was incomparable with any guqin Ye Yin Zhu had previously played. The heartstrings and zither strings were in perfect sync, making him able to seize every note with the simplest of changes. Both hands unceasingly changed into all kinds of gestures. Using the glissando and arpeggio special playing method, the music gradually pushed towards its climax.

To Angel, << High Mountains and Running Water >> resembled the monastic practice of the morning bell and evening drum, unceasingly aweing her heartstrings. She suddenly found herself unable to concentrate on her current battle. Hidden in the abyss of her mind, memories gradually rose to the forefront. She seemed to be looking at her and Anya's childhood. She was back in their carefree life in the Elven Forest, looking around at beauty of the Elven Forest. All in all, it was a harmony of nature.

As this unwittingly occurred in her mind, the dou qi and magic within her body rapidly weakened and weakened. Her body seemed to have slowed down. Facing Anya's assault, resistance became increasingly difficult. This oddity was

something Angel had no way of sensing. At this moment, she could only hear the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls play the song, << High Mountains and Running Water >>.

The same music had the opposite effect on Anya upon hearing it. Her originally depleted dou qi and magic was stimulated by << High Mountains and Running Water >>, circulating at an increasingly frequency. All kinds of magical elements resided in the air, flying towards her at lightning speed and condensing around her. All attributes of her body increased several folds.

Accompanied by the gradually quickening and incomparably pleasant zither music, Anya amazingly found herself dancing with the zither music instead of attacking her adversary. The tyrannical rays of Angel's violet light had been completely suppressed, and Angel was forced to retreat step by step.

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu's gestures changed, and the powerful, high majestic mountains in the music faded away, replaced by the chiming hum of water flowing down and falling back to the earth. "Seventy-Two Glissandi of Running Water" was this << High Mountains and Running Water >> song's most important technique. This was the first time Ye Yin Zhu had tried this technique, and he played it without any delay.

All eight fingers flowed smoothly, the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither's rhythm likened to that of moving clouds and flowing streams of nature. The gradation of zither music immediately reached the climax of the song. Both of Anya's hands at this time rested on Angel's body.

Smothering a groan, Angel's body flew back like an arrow, knocking over a dozen or so trees before falling to the ground. Blood trickled out of her mouth, her complexion immediately becoming deathly pale.

The pleasant lingering effect of running water drifted through the air as Ye Yin Zhu's hands gently rose from the strings, allowing the soft stubborn notes fade away.

Taking a deep breath, he could still feel the coziness of the warmth in his body that had promoted him to Yellow Bamboo Level 5. The Divine ranked Waterfall of Connecting Pearls not only allowed him to perfectly play << High Mountains and Running Water >>, it also enabled his zither magic advancement rate to

maximize.

Ye Yin Zhu’s magic was merely equivalent to Primary Level Green Rank, and the difference between he and Violet Rank Level 8 was too grand. When the zither music ended, Anya and Angel both sobered from the music’s intoxication.

“No, this couldn’t have happened.” Angel coughed another mouthful of blood, her face distrustfully looking at the distant Ye Yin Zhu. At his moment, her fathomless eyes held some confusion and an indescribable strangeness.

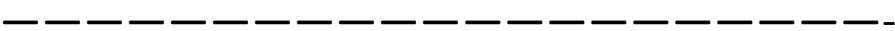
Anya was amazed that she’d defeated Angel. Looking down at her hands, she was astonished to discover the remnants of her finished battle with Angel. Within her body, her dou qi and magic weren’t as depleted as she’d assumed; they were even slowly recovering. She had no need to ask why. She should have lost to her sister, but Ye Yin Zhu’s fantastic music helped her prevail over Angel.

“You lost. That’s fact.” Anya coldly glared at Angel.

Angel stood up with some difficulty. “I lost, right. I lost. I have not lost to you, however, but to him. It was his zither. Yet, how did this happen? The disparity between his spiritual force and ours is incalculable. How did his zither still influence me?

Anya’s eyes flashed with murderous intent, but that icy, homicidal light rapidly disappeared. She lightly exclaimed, “Leave behind the Elixir of Life, and you can go. I don’t want to see you again. I also won’t kill you.”

Chapter 26 – Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither’s Power (III)



Angel smiled. Her smile was brilliant, but the deathly-still and icy gaze of hers intensified. “You are still weak. Like before, you are watching an opportunity slip through your fingers. I’ll go, but I will still come back later.” Her gaze rested on Ye Yin Zhu one last time. At this moment, Yin Zhu also opened his eyes.

Faint amazement flashed through Angel’s eyes because she realized Ye Yin Zhu had seemingly forgotten where he was. His temperament was graceful, his movements so harmonious it seemed like he had completely fused with the entirety of his surroundings. Especially that zither resting atop his knees; with it, he resembled a perfect entity. His gaze was so clear, even the purest crystal in

the world could not compare. This was the first time Angel had seen a pair of eyes lacking impurity.

Tossing a crystal phial towards Anya, Angel walked away. Although her body was severely injured, her retreating speed was still astonishing to see. She had lost today, but she was also able to witness a Divine Music mage and the strength of the Zither Sect's zither songs.

<< High Mountains and Running Water >> was within the top three divine songs of the Zither Sect's great nine famed songs. Its effects: weakness, amplification.

Among those great nine famed songs, six of them only held one effect. Of the three divine songs, all of them had two effects. The song played on the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls, << High Mountains and Running Water >>, was one of those songs. As an auxiliary, it held no direct attack power, but it could cause the opponent to hallucinate and constantly weaken by means of the zither music. At the same time, it could also increase an ally's strength continuously. All of this was in accordance to the control and decisions made of the music.

With Ye Yin Zhu's strength, it would have been absolutely impossible for him to bring out the effects of << High Mountains and Running Water >> without the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither. Even if he drew support from the divine device, using his spiritual force, he would only be able to influence, at most, 10 people or living creatures with << High Mountains and Running Water >>. He was unable to control both the extent of the weakness and amplification; he could only define the extent of one effect.

Divine Music mages and common mages had one major difference; the common mage became extremely weak upon casting large-scale magic or higher rank magic. Divine Music mages, on the other hand, could exhaust their magic, but their spiritual power was incomparably rich. Especially since Ye Yin Zhu actually accomplished this zither song—an achievement most Divine Music mages could only dream of.

In fact, with his strength, even if he relied on the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither to bring out << High Mountains and Running Water >>, it should have been impossible for that Violet Ranked sister of Anya, a peak expert, to be

influenced. The reason why it had succeeded was because these two women had fought each other with extreme viciousness since the beginning when he had left, so neither of them had much strength left by now to resist. It was to the extent that both of their pressures were ineffective against him then. As a result, such good effects came into being.

“Yin Zhu, thank you. Your zither playing is superb.” Angel left, and with her Anya’s iciness. Although she had been in dire straits and her clothing was ruined, she still emitted a luxurious air.

“Elder Sister Anya, are you alright?” Ye Yin Zhu asked in deep concern. His spiritual reserves and magical reserves had been completely used up, causing him to feel dizzy and enter a mystical realm.

Anya smiled, shook her head, and said, “I’m alright, but I got you involved. Yin Zhu, forget whatever you have heard today. Don’t tell anyone else, okay?”

“Okay.” Ye Yin Zhu nodded. As he had promised, he would absolutely not speak of these matters.

“Come help me treat my partner.” Both of Anya’s hands streaked across her chest, a light violet Six-Pointed Magic Star appearing from thin air. Rays of light flashed, and a magical beast emerged in front of her.

This was still the first time Ye Yin Zhu saw a Divine Spirit Horse-type magical beast. Naturally, it was equestrian, but it was entirely different from a common equestrian. It was at least double the size of the gnus Ye Yin Zhu had seen. Its whole body was snow white, not a speck of color corrupting its coat. A slender horn grew from the top of its head, spiraled to a point and flickering with a faint milky white radiance. The most fantastic thing were its pair of wings, a pair of humongous, extremely beautiful snow white wings that were folded on either side of his body. At this moment, originally clear, open eyes appeared dispirited. Ye Yin Zhu could clearly sense its aura of life continuously drain away.

Anya tenderly stroked its large head before saying to Ye Yin Zhu, “Didn’t you want to see my magical beast? This is my partner. It’s an alicorn called Mu, a rank 9 magical beast. I know you have many questions, but wait for me to cure it first before this Elder Sister tells you everything.” After she finished speaking, she opened the bottle Angel gave her and tipped its contents into the alicorn Mu’s

mouth.

Scentless, the translucent liquid carried a pure aura of nature, brimming with natural elemental energy that already made Ye Yin Zhu's heart untroubled, his spirit pleased.

The originally dispirited alicorn drank the Elixir of Life and immediately changed. Its dispirited eyes violently began changing.

Anya lifted up a hand to press against the alicorn's forehead. Violet rays of light unceasingly poured from her hand into the alicorn's body, increasing the circulation of the Elixir of Life and its effectiveness in healing the alicorn's internal damage. The depth of that violet light illustrated her current weakness. She was surprised, however, when she looked away from the alicorn and saw that Ye Yin Zhu was unaffected, unlike normal people. He didn't seem affected by Mu at all. Although the alicorn was the gentlest among rank 9 magical beasts, its powerful presence wasn't something ordinary people could bear.

An alicorn was truly exquisite, especially its pure and holy aura which made Ye Yin Zhu unable to tear his gaze away. He felt very comfortable around Mu. It was at least several times better than when he had seen those dragons.

The energy Anya was releasing weakened increasingly, until the violet rays of light disappeared completely. Mu's dispirited eyes had been replaced with clear, penetrating blue light. Ye Yin Zhu looked into those two large eyes with his own.

Anya softly said, "Mu, sleep. Sleep and wake later when you have returned to normal." A faint violet Six-Pointed magic star reappeared. Mu lightly rubbed its head against Anya's shoulder before walking through the Six-Pointed magic star, quietly disappearing.

"Elder Sister Anya, be careful." Ye Yin Zhu advanced forward with lightning speed, supporting Anya and narrowly preventing her collapse. By this time, her complexion had already become pale, her aura extremely feeble.

"I haven't felt this weak in a long time. Yin Zhu, carry me back to Floating Orchid Pavilion and place me in your performance area. I can no longer walk, and I need to rest. I have no other choice but to inconvenience you in carrying me." Even though Anya was weak, her voice was still tender.

“Alright.” Although Ye Yin Zhu had used up most of his magic, the strength of his Yellow Rank 5 dou qi and excited spiritual force prevented him from collapsing. Putting away the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls, he stooped down and placed Anya on his back.

To Ye Yin Zhu, Anya was very light. The burden on his back felt like nothing. With a mixed fragrance of orchids and musk from her battling and a high body temperature that was transmitted clearly due to her presence on his back, she smelled very comforting.

Anya’s body was very soft. As Ye Yin Zhu held onto her two thighs, the feeling of his hands on the tenderly warm, satin skin made an indescribably peculiar feeling arise in his heart.

Chapter 26 – Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither’s Power (IV)

“Head south, Yin Zhu.” Anya pointed off in a direction. Ye Yin Zhu’s back wasn’t very broad, but Anya felt very comfortable while lying on it. She could sense the differences in Ye Yin Zhu even clearer. When all was said and done, she didn’t resemble Ye Yin Zhu in ignorance. She hadn’t cultivate a Pure Zither Heart and was thus incapable of understanding the relations between a male and female. This was the first time her body had touched a man’s since she was born.

Anya’s charming face displayed a trace of a helpless smile. In her heart, she would always look at Ye Yin Zhu as a younger brother. This was because he was the only human male she didn’t feel disgust for. His purity and innocence was like the heart of a newborn¹. Along with his simplicity, his pleasant zither playing held Anya’s admirations.

“Yin Zhu, you don’t need to rush. You just used up a lot of your magic. Walk slowly and listen to your Elder Sister’s story, okay?” Anya leaned down onto Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder. Perhaps it was because she hadn’t been this weak in so many years that her gaze was currently a bit blurred.

“Elder Sister Anya, shouldn’t you be resting?” Having her whole body touch his back didn’t arise any wicked ideas within Ye Yin Zhu. He merely thought that Anya was in great need of his protection.

“Yin Zhu, do you know of the elves?” Anya asked.

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, “Grandfather once told me, ‘Elves are a noble race. They love peace, stand aloof from worldly affairs, and most of all, hate war. They live only in Origin Forest as children of nature.’ I have never seen an elf.”

Anya lightly pulled on her long hair, exposing two pointed ears. Although Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t see, Anya had, by now, become completely immersed within her past.

“Four hundred years ago, in the vast Elven Forest, a pair of twin sisters were born. They were the Elf Queen’s daughters and the pride of the entire Elven Race. Their outstanding talents had them surpassing their peers in strength within a very short period of time. They lived a happy life in the lush Origin Forest. The twin sisters were very kind-hearted. Every day, they would communicate with the elements of nature. Every elven clansmen believed that the two of them would lead the Elven Race into a smooth and steady future, their peace continuing eternally.”

Anya paused, her voice brimming with a gentle beauty.

“Elves and humans are different. Elves have a lifespan 10 times that of humans. An ordinary person can live for approximately 80 years. Even if they are powerful experts, they can only live up to 150 years with difficulty. An elf can live up to 800 years. These twins, as descendants of Elven Royalty, possessed a long lifespan of 1500 years. That year, they were already 200 years old. Among the elves, 200 years old was like 15 years to humans; they had just become adults. The twin sisters had begun to grow weary of the peaceful life in the Elven Forest. Thereupon, they rebelled against their mother repeatedly, secretly leaving the vast forest. They entered the human world.”

“Was the Elven Forest bad? Why did they leave?” Ye Yin Zhu asked curiously.

“Actually, no one found this strange. Even in the beautiful Elven Forest, if one has lived there for 200 years, then anyone would begin to feel weary. They entered the human country and immediately became attracted to the bustling human world. They were surrounded everywhere by things they have never seen before. For a moment, the sisters had gradually lost themselves in this new world. They didn’t forget to conceal their identity as elves though.

“Elves had very beautiful appearances, regardless of gender. And as part of the Elven Royal bloodline, these twin sisters were stunning. Very quickly, males harboring evil intentions stared at them. Unfortunately, those bad men didn’t know the sisters were not as simple as they appeared. The twin sisters each had Violet Rank Level 1 strength. Because they hadn’t used their powers in the outside world, the twin sisters weren’t careful enough. They had instantly killed those bad men upon releasing their powerful magic. That was their first massacre.”

“Oh!” Ye Yin Zhu cried out in surprise. “Elves are peaceful. To kill someone, that must have pained them greatly.”

Anya sighed. “You are not completely right. The two sisters had different responses. The younger sister was very afraid and even considered going back to the Elven Forest. She knew at last the horrors of the outside world. The elder sister was very excited, however, and her mind already began to stray. These twin lotus flowers that grew from one stalk diverged for the first time since birth. The next divergence also made them part ways. The older sister entered the human world while the younger sister panicked and returned to the Elven Forest.

“Ten years passed by in an instant. In ten years, the elder sister quickly created a tremendous reputation in the human world, relying on her beauty and Violet Rank strength to become the strongest in that generation. Because the younger sister had gone against her mother’s order, she received a harsh penalty upon returning to the Elven Forest.”

Ye Yin Zhu asked, “Why didn’t the Elf Queen retrieve the elder sister?”

Anya smiled and said, “That is because the Elf Queen was unable to leave the Elven Forest at that time. She must protect her clansmen. Apart from her, no other elf was able enough to subdue the elder sister. As a result, this was delayed continually.

“The Elf Queen suddenly passed away 10 years later. Just as she had one foot in the grave, the elder sister suddenly returned to the Elven Forest. At this moment, her strength had grown by a frightening amount. She had reached Violet Rank Level 3. It was hard to imagine increasing so tremendously in strength in a mere 10 years. She was very apathetic when confronting the dying

Elf Queen, not grieving even a bit. She had even gone against the Elf Queen's last decision to pass the crown to the younger sister, openly fighting with the younger sister over the Elven queenship." By this point in the tale, Anya's voice had already become impassioned.

"How could she do this? Don't tell me she forgot 200 years of sisterly feelings?" Ye Yin Zhu somewhat angrily said.

"I don't know. Even today, I still don't know." Anya's eyes moistened, her voice brimming with sorrow.

"The Elven Race stands aloof from worldly affairs. Under the decisiveness of the elder sister, the rest of the race surrendered to her. The younger sister was defeated at the hands of her elder sister and her pure self was banished from the Elven Forest, forever unable to return. The elder sister didn't know, however, that before the Elf Queen was at death's door, she had secretly given away the Elven Race's Symbolic Seed of Life to the younger sister. By the time she discovered this, the younger sister had already traveled far away.

"For two hundred years, the elder sister searched everywhere for her younger sister, wanting to seize away the Seed of Life. The younger sister matured with every passing day in the human world, however. She thought her mother's death strange, and when she recalled her elder sister's extreme peculiarity, she knew her mother's death had something to do with her elder sister. Even if she knew this, what use was it? She wasn't her elder sister's match and could only flee continuously, wandering from country to country.

"She later found a peaceful region to settle in temporarily after great difficulty. Only then did she seek the truth about her mother's death. Her steady conviction spurred, she cultivated even more assiduously than before. The disparity between her elder sister's strength and hers lessened more and more. Two hundred more years later, the younger sister felt that she could challenge her elder sister in strength. She returned to the Elven Forest. At this moment, the Elven Forest had completely changed. The former tranquility and harmony was nowhere to be seen. There was only an austere air. Calling herself the Elf Queen, the elder sister had actually been training her Elven clansmen into an army."

Chapter 27 – The Birth of the Silver Dragon Assassin (I)

Anya bitterly said, “The Elven Forest is very beautiful, and that hasn’t changed, but the elves are already lost—all but me. They have all become the elder sister’s tools. Angered, the younger sister launched a challenge towards her elder sister. Even if she hadn’t figured out the cause of her mother’s death, she would have still tried to seize back the Elven Forest from her elder sister’s grasp. This was so that she could attempt to return the elves back to their calm, harmonious life.

“The two of them were Violet Rank Level 7. They fought for three days and three nights. The younger sister’s strength was still inferior to that of her elder sister’s, so using the Seed of Life’s Protection, she fled for her life. Unwilling to die and bitter over her loss, she returned to the human world. Although she’d lost this time, it also made many things clear.

“Originally, she and her sister were alike; except that she’d mastered the water element while her elder sister actually possessed dark elemental power. The elder sister’s wickedness and violence was something the elves absolutely didn’t originally possess. This time, the younger sister already understood everything.

“In the end, however, she was still helpless, even though she knew what her elder sister had changed into. There was someone else behind all of this, manipulating these events from the shadows. The younger sister had no way to take revenge. She could only endure and wait, fervently practicing and wishing to one day become stronger.”

“Who is it? Who destroyed the Elven race?” Ye Yin Zhu’s clear eyes brimmed with anger; his gaze displaying murderous rage for the first time.

Anya smiled, but her smile was mournful. “There is only one person on this continent capable of enslaving the elder sister so long ago, in addition to directing her into improving her dark elemental magic while she was a Violet Rank. This is because only he has the ability to cultivate the dark element to that kind of realm. That person is the Dark Pagoda Master of the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda.”

“Blue Dias Seven Pagoda!” Ye Yin Zhu cried out in surprise.

“Yes, it is him. Apart from him, who else possesses this kind of strength?” Anya’s gentle and soft nature disappeared; all that remained was profound bitterness and resentment.

Up until now, Ye Yin Zhu only had a vague impression of the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda. After listening to Anya’s tale, however, his image of the Blue Dias Seven Pagoda within his heart deviated off the rails, tipping over to the dark side.

“In all likelihood, you have already guessed it. The elder sister who is still trying to find me to this day is Angel, and I am that younger sister. Alas! Even if I possess Violet Rank Level 8 strength, I cannot contend against her power. Not to mention, behind her is the Dark Pagoda. I am almost positive that the Dark Pagoda Master has something to do with mother’s death. At that time, mother should have only been 800 years old!” Anya choked off, sobbing, as she said this.

“Elder Sister Anya, don’t cry. In the future, I will definitely help you get revenge,” Ye Yin Zhu firmly stated.

Anya merely smiled softly, but she didn’t say anything. Her using her Violet Rank Level 8 to take revenge was far off in some indefinite future. Although Ye Yin Zhu’s zither music was peculiar, the difference in strength was far too great. But, she didn’t anticipate that she would one day walk into the Dark Pagoda, following at the back of this pure-hearted youth.

Suddenly, Anya’s complexion shifted slightly. She whispered, “Yin Zhu, hurry. We should first head west, deviating off the road. I don’t want the people in Milan to see me like this.”

“Oh.” Ye Yin Zhu agreed and changed directions, rushing off westward.

Several breaths of time after they left, a squadron of a hundred Dragon Cavalrymen travelling on foot sped past, rumbling loudly. Dashing at the front was the Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander—Austin of the Violet Clan.

Because they’d taken a detour, by the time Ye Yin Zhu, carrying Anya on his back, returned to Milan City, the sun had set to the west. It was evening, and the autumn air was very cool and refreshing.

“Yin Zhu, put me down.” Anya patted Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder. After resting the entire journey, her physical strength and energy had recovered a bit. Even she

was amazed at how quickly she'd recovered. After thinking about it a second time, she reasoned that it had something to do with Ye Yin Zhu's zither song performance.

"Elder Sister Anya, there might be some period when I can't go to work," Ye Yin Zhu said.

"Why? Because of Angel? I will never let her get away with the same thing again."

"No, of course not. The Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts wants a coalition of students to join in the autumn defense war. I have been chosen."

Hearing his explanation, Anya's face colored with embarrassment. "So it's like this. Yin Zhu, your zither music really is quite wonderful. Oh, by the way, last time this Elder Sister said she wanted to gift you a magical beast. It is time to honor this promise. Let's go." She didn't wait for Ye Yin Zhu's reply after she spoke. With a wave of her hand, they soared into the air.

Violet Rank Level 8 strength was truly frightening. Although she had only recovered after a short while, she had already regained the ability to fly. She pulled Ye Yin Zhu and focused on trying to find a path with less people to speed along. Her speed right now was several times faster than when Yin Zhu was carrying Anya on his back.

"Yin Zhu." Sura was surprised when he saw Ye Yin Zhu and Anya arrive together. He immediately rose, carrying Ye Yin Zhu's Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance Zither in his hands.

The first thing was to return the zither to Ye Yin Zhu.. Then, both of Sura's hands grabbed at Yin Zhu's arm, and he looked him over incessantly. Her complexion appeared somewhat pale, seemingly very exhausted.

Anya smiled and said, "Be at ease, nothing is wrong with him. You two, follow me." As she spoke, she loosened her grip on Ye Yin Zhu's hand.

Since the time Angel had carried Ye Yin Zhu away, Sura had tried to pursue them with all of his strength, but how could her speed compare to those siblings? In merely a couple of seconds, she'd lost track of them. Sura crazily searched everywhere, even looking outside the city as well, but couldn't find a

single trail. Without any choice, she could only return to Floating Orchid Pavilion and wait, praying that Ye Yin Zhu would be all right.

It somewhat amazed Ye Yin Zhu when all the waiters didn't ask any questions, simply greeting Anya when they re-entered Floating Orchid Pavilion

Anya led the two of them to the third floor. This was the first time Ye Yin Zhu and Sura had been there.

Floating Orchid Pavilion's third floor was very spacious. It did not have rooms, but muslin curtains sectioning off areas all over the place. Anya led them past the muslin curtains and followed a pathway to a fantastical area.

Floating Orchid Pavilion was built with an ancient tree as its core. The pathway could be described as a small bridge so to say, except that it led towards the top of the huge, ancient tree. Because the treetop was dense, it was absolutely impossible to see up past it from beneath the canopy.

Entering the treetop, the surroundings were filled with thick branches and leaves. Not only was the air here fresh and clean, but it also possessed a surging life force. At the end of the small bridge was the humongous tree trunk, with no additional path after it.

"Open, Gate of Life," Anya chanted lowly. She faced the rough tree trunk as it suddenly shined with a faint green brilliance. An unusual door quietly swung open. Amazed, Ye Yin Zhu and Sura followed behind Anya, walking into the tree trunk and into this wondrous world.

The interior wasn't very large, nor was it excessively bizarre. It was simply a room of approximately 30 square meters. This was Anya's true residence. A simple wooden bed, wooden table, and some personal effects were arranged around the room. What made Ye Yin Zhu the most surprised was that the breath of nature here was very rich. It seemed like every breath he took would cause his body to become more relaxed and invigorated—especially the Wood Attribute Bamboo Dou Qi inside his body. This complementary breath of nature provoked an automatic response as his body began to insatiably absorb that energy.

Chapter 27 – The Birth of the Silver Dragon Assassin (II)

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“It’s already quite late in the day; I need to rest, so I won’t keep you any longer. Yin Zhu, this is for you.” After she spoke, Anya took out a milky white egg from a table. She handed over the egg, which was approximately the size of a person’s head, to Ye Yin Zhu.

“What’s this?” Ye Yin Zhu subconsciously accepted the egg. He then felt the faint pulsing of a heartbeat that wasn’t his own, as it had come from inside the egg. A pure elemental aura flowed continuously from the egg. The aura wasn’t just of one type of element, but was rather composed of all the magical elements! The milky white eggshell had a veined silver pattern along its exterior, accompanied by a flickering and glittering magical elemental fluctuation.

“This is my gift to you. You need a powerful magical beast, so this should be very suitable.” Anya smiled faintly as she looked at this egg, her eyes exuding a gentle light.

“Silver Dragon egg. Heavens!” Sura cried, unable to restrain himself. His gaze didn’t budge from the egg.

Anya glanced at him. “Because I trust Yin Zhu, you are also allowed to be here. I want you to not speak a word of what you see here today.”

Sura’s expression was somewhat complicated as he glanced at Anya. She naturally knew how precious a Silver Dragon egg was. ‘To be able to give away such a precious thing, Anya must possess an incomparably powerful strength.’ Sura’s heart was already confused.

“Elder Sister Anya, are you saying that this egg contains a Silver Dragon?” Ye Yin Zhu lightly caressed the eggshell as he posed the question.

Anya smiled, nodding her head before saying, “Yes. If you choose to form a contract with it, this Ancient Tree of Life will hatch the egg, nurturing and maturing it. A Silver Dragon has dragon magic, which is extremely strong. Against a mature Silver Dragon, even I’m not necessarily capable of contending against it. I already have Mu, so I don’t need it and have now given it to you. I know you are a kindhearted character, so I’m reassured. This egg was something I had picked up previously. When its parents were approaching their ends, it was given to me.

“If a Silver Dragon grows naturally, it is impossible for it to fully mature within

a thousand years. When it agrees to a contract with a human, however, it can absorb power from a few magic items through the contract in order to promote the growth of its own magic. I believe it will definitely become your greatest ally. You can have it follow you around. Even as an infant Silver Dragon, it is still enough to intimidate many rudimentary magical beasts.”

“Elder Sister Anya, thank you. But, I cannot accept.” Ye Yin Zhu shook his head, handing the Silver Dragon egg back to Anya.

Anya frowned and said, “Although a Silver Dragon egg is very precious, you did save me today, so consider this your reward. Besides, this was what I had promised you previously.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled slightly and said, “No, it’s not because of how precious it is, but because I’m already unable to sign a contract.” He had even given away a divine item casually, so Anya gifting him this item didn’t make him think it was something inappropriate. How could he?

Anya was alarmed. “Don’t tell me you already have a magical beast?” She couldn’t refrain from being worried. Her greatest fear was the pure Ye Yin Zhu contracting with a rudimentary magical beast.

“No, no. I don’t have a magical beast. Instead, I already signed an Equal Life Contract with my best friend. So, I can’t sign a contract with a magical beast.”

“Equal Life Contract!” Anya cried out; she knew what this contract entailed better than anyone else! “You, how could you do this? Who told you of this contract? Don’t tell me you signed it with him?” Her gaze shot towards Sura.

Sura shook his head. “It wasn’t me.”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Elder Sister Anya, do you remember when I disappeared today? The partner I signed the contract with sensed that I was in danger and summoned me away.”

Anya smiled and nodded her head, saying, “Apparently, you really have no opportunity with this magical dragon. Only, I really didn’t expect you to go as far as to sign a long extinct Equal Life Contract with someone. To the best of my knowledge, this contract belonged to the bloodline of a powerful clan. But this clan has not emerged for five centuries. If your friend is truly a descendant of

this clan, I'm afraid that all of the northern lands will change because of him. Tell me, what name is your friend known by?"

"He is called Zi." Ye Yin Zhu didn't cover up the truth.

Anya involuntarily exclaimed, "Zi? That's right! He definitely belongs to that clan. I truly didn't expect this clan to unexpectedly have a descendant still. If he and you have signed the contract, then you really don't need this magical dragon."

Sura curiously asked, "When all's said and done, what kind of clan is this? Don't tell me this clan can match with Silver Dragons?"

Anya looked at Ye Yin Zhu, her eyes displaying a strange light. "Zi hasn't told you his origins"

Ye Yin Zhu automatically nodded.

Anya said, "Then it isn't my place to tell you. When it is time for you to know, he will definitely tell you himself. Well, you can go. I'm a little tired."

"What about this Silver Dragon egg?" Ye Yin Zhu had tried to hand over the egg to Anya, but she hadn't taken it back.

Anya smiled faintly and said, "What I give is never retaken. Remember what I said when I gave you my ring. It is now yours. You can do with it however you wish. Only, regardless of who this Silver Dragon egg belongs to, you have to be prepared to answer questions from the Silver Dragons. When that moment comes, give them these scales and leave. These are reverse scales that the parents of the Silver Dragon egg had been left behind as a memento when they were at death's door. With it, the Silver Dragons won't misunderstand." As she said this, she released a circular, approximately 20 centimeter diameter, silver scale from her space ring and passed it to Ye Yin Zhu.

"Then thank you, Elder Sister Anya." Ye Yin Zhu could no longer refuse. He looked at Anya's weary appearance and finally placed the egg and scale into his space ring. He and Sura then bid their farewells and left.

They had just left when a gentle voice rang out from the espalier to the side. "Elder Sister, you really gave it away! That Silver Dragon would be better off given to me." A gentle figure gradually became clearer, emerging from the

espalier. It was unexpectedly the head waiter, Dida.

Anya sighed lightly and said, “You! Your vision is highly narrow and shallow. Don’t tell me you can’t see how much potential Yin Zhu has? Today, Angel and I fought, and in the end he was the reason I was able to win. I didn’t expect to still be weaker than Angel even after cultivating in the Ancient Tree of Life.”

“What? Are you saying that Yin Zhu helped you defeat Angel?” Dida’s eyes brimmed with disbelief.

Anya nodded and said, “I haven’t ever heard such pleasant zither music. It caused quite a bit of shock in my heart, especially when I was in a weakened state. Yin Zhu’s character is pure. Besides, apart from you being my little brother, I have not lied to him. Just now, you must have also heard our conversation. The Amethyst Clan’s descendant is unexpectedly still alive and is also his Equal Life Contract partner. Perhaps, Ye Yin Zhu can really help us resolve our hatred in the future. We can consider that Silver Dragon as my reward to him.”

Dida nodded and said, “Elder Sister, I understand your painstaking efforts. Ye Yin Zhu’s good relation with us will produce benefits for the future.”

Anya smiled slightly. “Foolish little brother, don’t be pragmatic. In my mind, he is also my little brother. No matter when, Yin Zhu will battle alongside us. I merely wish for him to mature quicker. Angel has already found us here, so you need to pack. We must be careful, so hide your aura well. She came to find the Seed of Life; that means she will try to find you.”

“I will. But, is the Amethyst Clan really that powerful?” Dida asked this final question, his eyes staring into Anya’s with a trace of fear.

“You will understand later on.”

Chapter 27 – The Birth of the Silver Dragon Assassin (III)

“Yin Zhu, what happened today?”

“Yin Zhu, how strong is Miss Anya?”

“Yin Zhu, who was that woman?”

“Yin Zhu, where did you guys go?”

“Yin Zhu, ...”

Since leaving the Floating Orchid Pavilion, Sura’s barrage of questions had yet to stop. His exhausting bombardment lasted until they returned to the dormitory.

“Sura, I promised Elder Sister Anya not to say anything. Don’t give me a hard time, okay?” Ye Yin Zhu forced a smile, shaking his head.

“Not okay, don’t tell me that you don’t know how strong my curiosity is?! I’m concerned about you too!” Sura assumed a wronged appearance.

Ye Yin Zhu suddenly laughed. “I know a method to make you stop asking questions.”

“Eh?” Sura looked at him with discontent.

With a flash of light, a large Silver Dragon egg appeared out of nowhere into Ye Yin Zhu’s hands.

“Here. Have it; you won’t continue asking anymore questions, right?”

“You’re giving me the Silver Dragon egg? Are you sick, Mr. Loose Money Kid?” Sura looked at him, stunned.

Ye Yin Zhu shrugged and said, “It’s useless to me anyway, so I can just use it to shut you up.”

Sura bitterly laughed. “Have you ever seen an assassin with a dragon as a magical beast?”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “I have never even seen a genuine assassin. But who stipulated that an assassin cannot have a magical dragon? It can at least protect your retreat after you finish your assassination.”

Sura widened his eyes and said, “If I have a Silver Dragon, what kind of assassin would I be? It would be better for me to be a frontliner. No need, no need, you keep it or give it to someone else.”

Ye Yin Zhu scratched his head. “Zi doesn’t seem to like dragons very much. Besides the two of you, who else can I give it to?”

Sura groaned. “The many girls you know at the institution, randomly give it to one of them.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes brightened. “Right! Our Divine Music division girls’ defenses are comparatively weak. If any of them have a Silver Dragon mount, then she could also bring out its effects.”

“You... you really want to give the Silver Dragon to them?” Sura suddenly realized this fool basically didn’t understand he’d said those words in a moment of anger.

Ye Yin Zhu asked in befuddlement, “Didn’t you just suggest that a moment ago?”

Sura suddenly reached out with his hand and plucked the Silver Dragon egg from Ye Yin Zhu’s grip. “I changed my mind. I want it.”

“Then I’ll give this to you as well.” Ye Yin Zhu handed over the Silver Dragon reverse scales, smiling.

“You just tricked me, didn’t you?” Sura looked at him suspiciously.

Ye Yin Zhu had an innocent look. “I didn’t! But I think with your personality, such generosity is certainly nonexistent.”

Sura stepped on Ye Yin Zhu’s foot, hard. “Poor people are not as cheap as me. Dragon Assassin; I don’t know if this new vocation will be trash or not.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. “Why don’t we hatch it right now and see what the baby dragon looks like?”

Sura nodded and chanted the basic contract incantation everyone used. He didn’t have his own magical beast yet. With this Silver Dragon as an option, he no longer needed to hesitate in using his sole chance for a contract.

His expression became slightly grave. Biting his finger, he placed a droplet of blood onto Silver Dragon egg, which began to flicker with silver rays of light. He chanted lowly, “Using my blood as evidence, witness this permanent, ancient, invariant contract. We shall be connected in heart and spirit, our blood interlinked, for all of eternity.”

His blood quietly permeated the eggshell. The moment Sura finished his

incantation, a burst of silver light surged out excitedly. He and the egg were enveloped completely, the magical elements in the air flaring up. The Silver Dragon egg released brilliant rays of light. Similar to how all rivers eventually run into the sea, these rays of light absorbed the elemental energy rampaging around.

In the depths of Sura's soul, a strange energy was drawn out. Something seemed to have appeared within his consciousness. What seemed to be his soul spirit and blood meridians were being drawn out and released into a silvery light that held the aura of life, linking with it completely.

A light shattering sound echoed out as minute cracks began to appear at the top of the Silver Dragon egg. Immediately, the cracks enlarged, the silvery light intensifying. Cracks already covered the entire egg.

Peng. Ye Yin Zhu and Sura watched attentively as the small Silver Dragon's head bored its way through the eggshell. Its bright, clear, moon-like eyes held bewilderment. It opened its snout and bit on the eggshell. Ka-Cha. Ka-Cha. The crisp sound continuously rang out. It was actually eating its own eggshell.

After eating the entire eggshell, the Silver Dragon's body was gradually revealed. Stretched out, its body was probably half a meter long and covered with round, densely packed silver scales. Four tiny claws restlessly flailed around. A pair of wings lightly flapped uselessly as they gradually unfolded. It seemed that it was temporarily unable to fly. It appeared that the eggshell was a huge supplement for it. When the small Silver Dragon finished eating its eggshell, its body had clearly grown a bit.

Because of the pull of the contract, the small Silver Dragon's clear gaze found Sura's. It blinked its two huge beautiful eyes, using its adorable head to rub against Sura's chest as it cried out two syllables. "Mama!" Its voice brimmed with youthfulness, though its pronunciation was still slightly unclear.

Ye Yin Zhu was stunned. Sura, who was embarrassed, was very red in the face.

"Wow, it can speak! But why did it call you 'Mama?'" Ye Yin Zhu asked in awe.

Sura lovingly caressed the small Silver Dragon's head. Awkwardly, he explained, "Perhaps because I am the first living creature it saw, it recognized me as its mother. Small thing, I will call you Yin Bi1 from now on, okay?"

“Eh, Sura you are too greedy.” Ye Yin Zhu fought for the small Silver Dragon’s justice on its behalf. It seemed like he epically failed, however, as the small Silver Dragon actually nodded its head in excitement. Apparently, it verily approved of this name. Ye Yin Zhu didn’t know that this kind of draconic creature and Sura had a shared interest—they both loved money. Although it was still young, it had the advanced intellect of a Silver Dragon. Its genius had already begun to emerge.

Sura smiled and said, “You see, it loves this name. It’ll be called Yin Bi.”

Since Sura was an assassin and not a mage, she didn’t have access to her own spatial dimension. She could only place the small Silver Dragon on her bed and excitedly observe this adorable little guy with Ye Yin Zhu.

“Sura, how can it speak after it just hatched?”

“You dolt! A Silver Dragon belongs to the highest ranked dragon race. Besides, legends say that they are Divine Gigantic Dragons. It’s the dragon race that reigns over all magical beasts. Naturally, it is born with intelligence. I just don’t know when it will mature.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, “No matter what you say, you are now the first Dragon Assassin on the continent, or better yet, the Silver Dragon Assassin.”

Lightly stroking Yin Bi’s scales, Sura slowly lifted his head, his luminous gaze staring at Ye Yin Zhu. “Yin Zhu, why are you so good to me? The Eternal Substitute Puppet, Angel’s Sigh, and now Little Yin. Each and every one of them is considered priceless, but you still gifted them to me easily.”

“Aren’t we friends?” Ye Yin Zhu casually said.

Sura gazed at him with a profound look. “Yin Zhu, you are a good friend. If you want to survive in this world, however, you can’t be like this. You cannot trust people this easily. In the future, you will likely suffer.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and commented, “I am confident in my judgement. Besides, these things weren’t freely given to you. From now on, I no longer need to feel embarrassed while I watch you clean the room or prepare a meal. Those things, including this baby dragon, cannot be equal to the meals eaten. I still hope you continue to prepare meals for me to eat.” After this, he somewhat bashfully said,

“Sura, I’m hungry...”

Chapter 27 – The Birth of the Silver Dragon Assassin (IV)

“Actually, ...” Sura suddenly thought of something. Although he was excited and on the verge of speaking what was on his mind, in the end, he didn’t voice it.

“Actually what?” Ye Yin Zhu inquisitively looked at him.

“Nothing, I’ll go prepare a meal.”



The Freshman Competition of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts had concluded perfectly, entering the new school term on schedule. The majority of students attended class, and the teachers of each division also began the long process of selecting their candidates. Finally, after three days of screening and with President Ferguson’s final confirmation, the candidates participating in the Milan Autumnal Defensive War were tentatively determined.

Each and every student capable of entering this list of names could be said to be those that the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts planned to focus on nurturing. The students were mainly native to the Milan Empire. After all, as the empire’s Imperial Institution, the Milan Royal Family didn’t want to cultivate outstanding talents for other countries.

The list of names were rapidly verified by each division. The students participating in this Autumnal Defensive War numbered a hundred, of which sixty were warriors and forty rare mages. In order to ensure the safety of their students, the majority of warriors selected were from the Heavy Sword division and Heavy Cavalry division because they had the strongest defense.

The mages were relatively diverse, with at least one student chosen from each division. Whether it was a warrior or mage, however, participation was done in order to gain experience. Most of the candidates were, therefore, senior students. Only a few exceptionally talented underclassmen were able to participate.

There were three candidates altogether from the Divine Music Division: Ye Yin Zhu, Hai Yang, and Xiang Luan. Originally Hai Yang wasn't included in the selection, but Hai Yang used some unknown method in order to participate. She had explained to Ye Yin Zhu that she wanted to make sure she could continue to receive his treatments. After all, this war might go on into the winter.

Apart from Ye Yin Zhu, the first-years of the Magic Department that were participating in this operation included Yue Ming of the Dark Magic division, Chang Hao of the Spatial Domain division, Ma Liang of the Summon division, Carol of the Light division, Freud of the Spiritual division, and Rolande of the Wind division. All of them had displayed an outstanding performance during the Freshman Competition as their division's general, and as Sura had said and expected, he became one of the sixty warrior candidates.

"Teacher, you were looking for me?" Ye Yin Zhu pushed open the door to Ferguson's office and entered.

"Yin Zhu, come sit down." Ferguson smiled as he looked at him, his finger pointing to a chair to the side. "You will set off on your journey in a few days, but I have yet to teach you anything since I have taken you as a disciple. Recently, Dean Nina and I investigated some matters concerning Divine Music mages, specifically searching for ancient Divine Music magic cultivation records. For the time being, I don't have a great deal of things to teach you. This journal is the compilation of my records on the characteristics of Spiritual magic manipulation over the past several years. Hold onto this and take a look; it might help you somewhat." As he said this, he extracted a thick journal from his space ring and handed it over to Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu took the journal and examined it. The cover of the journal only had Ferguson's name on it.

"Thank you, sir."

"Divine Music mages are classified as a specialized Spiritual mage. Although you mainly rely on the Divine Music vocation, if you can harmonize with Spiritual magic and control it, I think your zither music's might become even stronger. This is also your path of development from now on."

"I will study it carefully," Ye Yin Zhu earnestly promised.

Ferguson smiled. “The institution’s teachers most likely won’t join this upcoming Autumnal Defensive War in order to not adversely influence the collaboration of the troops. You all must listen to the orders of the Army Commander. Following that, Heavy Cavalry division fifth-year student Oliveira will lead.

“In fact, the students participating in the war are merely joining to gain a good understanding of a battlefield and to attain some experience. It is unlikely that there would be any dangerous missions for all of you to execute, so just take care of yourself. You may go; I’m convinced you can learn many things from this war. I only want to remind you: if you run into any danger, put your safety first. I don’t want any accidents to happen to you. After all, you are only a student and not a genuine soldier.”

“Teacher, how long will this war last?” Ye Yin Zhu asked. In his mind, as far as the war was concerned, he didn’t have a large understanding of it. He just knew their enemy were the beastmen. Subconsciously, because of what Zi once told him, his view of beastmen was not bad.

Ferguson answered, “Generally speaking, beastmen continually raid for food for two months. When the winter approaches, they retreat. Every year, this war restarts. Our Milan Empire’s army is the strongest in the continent. One of the reasons for this prestige is because we continuously hone the soldiers with the war against the beastmen. Those other southern countries are unable to compare with this. Yin Zhu, I recall that you are an Arcadian, right?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded.

Ferguson hesitated before saying, “Arcadia is the weakest kingdom on the continent. As my student, if you are willing, I can make you an official member of the Milan Empire, as well as your family.”

Ye Yin Zhu looked at him with surprise. “Become a member of Milan? This... I cannot take responsibility for deciding. Wait for me to ask my grandfather; only then can I give you a reply.”

Ferguson smiled slightly. He wasn’t worried. In his mind, Arcadia couldn’t compare with even a city in Milan. He believed that the powerful Milan Empire could surely recruit Ye Yin Zhu’s rare talent. “You can go. Be prepared and return

safely.”



Milan Empire’s conscription order was officially declared the next day. A hundred students from the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, organized as a single group, formed a mixed small squadron that would become a part of the Imperial Dragon Cavalry regiment of a thousand men. This regiment would then hurry to Milan Empire’s frontier stronghold, some distance away from Mjolnir Stronghold—Sacred Heart City. They would be hurriedly led by a prominent figure of the Milan Empire.

This person was one of the two generalissimos of the Milan Empire, Milan’s Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander, Violet Clan Head Maldini.

To the Milan Empire, the purpose of the Autumnal Defensive War was primarily to guard their territory and not to counter against the beastmen’s looting. Thus, defense was the main priority. As one of two generalissimos of the empire, Maldini was an expert in defense, making it most fitting for him to take charge.



At first light, Ye Yin Zhu and the other students all chose to meet up together before heading to the central training field to wait. When the Dragon Cavalry regiment rode into view, they set off.

All of the mages looked similar; they all wore magic robes and had very gentle appearances. Most of them had to have a good family background in order to be able to study at Milan. Backing a powerful mage was a great amount of wealth and resources. Therefore, almost every participating mage in this Autumnal Defensive War had their own space ring. Although it was not apparent on the surface, but mages could be carrying a lot of articles on their person. The warriors weren’t as lucky. Many of them were burdened with a variety of things. They also weren’t as calm as mages; their faces expressing excitement as they looked forward to stepping onto a battlefield. Madmen like Nesta were not few in number within the Martial Arts Department.

Warriors genuinely wanted to join the battlefield whilst mages were the biggest targets during a war. This was the main reason why their attitudes were

so different.

“Yin Zhu, this time we will fight side by side.” Ma Liang stood beside Ye Yin Zhu, smiling as he spoke.

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Ma Liang, you are participating in the war?”

Chapter 28 – Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander (I)

Ma Liang shook his head. “Of course not. War is cruel. I just hope that we all have enough mental strength to bear it. Oh, that’s right, let me introduce you to someone. Chang Hao, please come over here.” He turned towards a mage that was standing alone and beckoned him over.

A youth wearing a silver magic robe heard what was said and walked over. His appearance was very simple, honest, and average looking, but he had an unusual temperament that made him unforgettable. In particular, his pair of black eyes which brimmed with wisdom and foresight seemed incompatible with his simple and honest appearance.

“Yin Zhu, this is the Spatial Domain division student I told you about. We’re all in the same year.” As he spoke, he sent a meaningful glance towards Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu immediately understood. “Ah! So you are...”

Chang Hao hurriedly gestured for Ye Yin Zhu to shut up. “I know very well that we are kin. When the moment comes, we will mutually aid one another.” His voice was astonishingly clear and bright, making it very comfortable to listen to. Combined with his simple and honest appearance, he easily gave people a favorable impression.

Ma Liang smiled and said, “Yin Zhu, don’t be fooled by this guy’s appearance. He is known as the smartest person in the Magic Department. He cultivates a branch of Spatial Domain magic, and his expertise is winning from a position of weakness.”

Chess Sect; he was a disciple of the Chess Sect. Ye Yin Zhu was completely certain of this in his heart. His heart naturally held intimacy towards all who come from the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects.

Chang Hao smiled. “You are speaking nonsense. If I really am an expert at winning from a position of weakness, then it wouldn’t have been impossible for the Spatial Domain division to enter the finals.”

Ma Liang jested, “That’s because you bit into a hard bone!”¹

“Boy, who are you calling a hard bone?” A proud, ice-cold voice echoed. Wearing a gold magic robe, a youth had walked up to them without them noticing. With short golden locks, a handsome but somewhat harsh appearance, and intentionally releasing waves of tremendous spiritual force, he appeared to be trying to intimidate the three of them.

Ma Liang smiled but remained silent. To the side, Chang Hao’s eyes flashed with a cold light. “So it’s you who’s the cold, hard bone, Freud. Don’t tell me Ma Liang spoke wrongly?”

Ye Yin Zhu was still the same. Amicably, he greeted, “Hello! Divine Music division, Ye Yin Zhu.”

Freud snorted coldly. “Spiritual division first-year general Freud. I didn’t expect this Freshman Competition to make you, a Divine Music division kid, champion. Only later on was it revealed that you are the President’s disciple. Ye Yin Zhu, I want to challenge you.”

“Challenge? Now?” Ye Yin Zhu looked at him in surprise.

Freud loftily said, “As a Spiritual mage, sometimes defeating an opponent only requires a moment. What, are you afraid?”

Ye Yin Zhu’s brows creased slightly. “We are soon leaving for the battlefield. All of us are comrade-in-arms, so we should cooperate with each other.”

Freud disdainfully said, “Who would work together with you plebeians. You really are imagining that your goodwill would be reciprocated. It seems you are afraid.”

The previously sarcastic Chang Hao was now silent, his eyes looking a bit expectant and ponderous. He looked at Ye Yin Zhu. During the Freshman Competition, he and Freud had fought to a stalemate, preventing both of their divisions from entering the finals. When the finals began, they had still been recuperating from their injuries, so they were unable to see Ye Yin Zhu and Ma Liang’s final decisive battle.

Although Chang Hao and Freud were arch-enemies, the two of them were a bit alike—neither of them accepted Ye Yin Zhu. To them, how could the Divine Music division win the Freshman competition when it was impossible for them to

do so.

As for Ma Liang, only he knew the extent of Ye Yin Zhu's genuine strength, so he naturally didn't care.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head. "I'm not scared of you, but now is not a suitable time for a challenge."

Freud laughed out loud. "Still saying you're not scared? Let's see if you are able to resist my Spiritual Shockwave." As his words fell, his eyes suddenly turned silver. A Spiritual Shockwave with little prior warning ruthlessly knocked against Ye Yin Zhu.

Ma Liang and Chang Hao hadn't expected Freud to sneakily attack. Both of them simultaneously shouted, "Watch out!"

The gentle Ye Yin Zhu faced Freud. Just as Freud released his spiritual force, a protective layer of intangible spiritual force shielded him, so the attack basically didn't affect Ye Yin Zhu.

Simplicity was not the same as weakness or even a fear of battle. Ye Yin Zhu's face still held an indifferent smile, but in a split second, he arrived in front of Freud. He stepped forward, directly smashing through Freud's second wave of spiritual force. Like lightning, his right hand extended out and grabbed Freud's throat. There was no delay between these natural and unforced movements.

Freud was alarmed. Although he anticipated the ineffectiveness of his spiritual waves, Ye Yin Zhu clearly didn't use any magic. He sensed that Ye Yin Zhu's spiritual force was as impregnable as a diamond. His spiritual wave attacks had shattered like dragonflies shaking a stone tower.² In a split second, his neck had been grabbed by four fingers, and a suffocating feeling instantly spread throughout his entire body. Ye Yin Zhu suddenly released a tyrannical aura in addition to his magic, oppressing Freud's heartbeat until it nearly stopped.

Freud was slightly taller than Ye Yin Zhu, but now the two of them stood face to face. Ye Yin Zhu's right hand gradually increased its force, causing his opponent's complexion to become increasingly red, like rotten pig liver.

"I don't like you. Leave and don't bother me again." His right hand flung Freud's body away like a rag. Boom! He crashed into a Heavy Sword warrior who

was wearing heavy armor, causing the student to start in surprise. Automatically turning around, his elbow just happened to meet Freud’s nose. Steel met flesh. Immediately, Freud’s face resembled an overturned dye shop. A mournful, blood-curdling screech rang out, as if his leg had been sliced by a rabid fowl.

“Yin Zhu, when all’s said and done, are you a mage or a warrior?” Chang Hao looked at him, dumbstruck.

Ma Liang laughed lowly. “And you staked everything to stalemate with Freud, who is unable to withstand a single blow of Ye Yin Zhu’s hand. Now you can no longer be skeptical of his champion strength. He cultivates both magic and martial arts.”

“What is happening?” Freud’s blood-curdling screech had gained the attention of all the students present. A tall youth walked up from the right. Wherever he walked, the other students, regardless of whether it was an upperclassmen or lowerclassmen, automatically stepped out of his way. The valiant Nesta was no exception.

Appearing to be 20 years old, the oceanic-blue heavy armor he wore seemed particularly tough and emitted a faint magical aura. With a glance, it could be seen as an unusual magical armor set. Sheathed on his back was a broadsword. Long light-blue hair framed his gorgeously strong face. Although he wore thick armor, he didn’t walk with loud, resounding footfalls; he gave people a tenacious feeling. Surpassing two meters in height, he resembled a tough fortress.

Ye Yin Zhu trembled in his heart. He felt a dangerous aura from this person.

“Elder Brother Oliveira, Ye Yin Zhu bullied me,” Freud complained, wiping the blood from his face. His current appearance held no trace of arrogance in the slightest.

Chapter 28 – Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander (II)

Oliveira? Ye Yin Zhu felt as though this name was vaguely familiar. Suddenly, he remembered that Sura once mentioned him. Milan had a few powerful, influential clans. This youth called Oliveira was the third son of the current

generation Lan Clan and Rolande's elder brother. Reportedly, he had strength equivalent to a Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander and was the captain of the squadron of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts students heading to war.

Listening to Freud, Oliveira's handsome face exuded a trace of astonishment. His gaze immediately fell upon Ye Yin Zhu. "You are Ye Yin Zhu? The Divine Music boy who injured my little sister?"

"I am Ye Yin Zhu." Even if the other was a bit polite, it appeared Oliveira didn't have good intentions towards him, so Ye Yin Zhu didn't address him as 'Senior.'

Oliveira's eyes flashed with a cold light. "Good. If you can defeat my younger sister in a fair match, then your strength is surely pretty good. All of us are about to set out for the battlefield, so we are all comrade-in-arms. But before we even set off, you have already injured a comrade. In the army, breaking this camaraderie is liable for execution. Although we have not officially joined the army, I cannot pardon you."

Ye Yin Zhu's gaze gradually became cold. Not bothering to explain anything, he coldly asked, "Then what do you want?"

Oliveira said, "You are a first-year student. If I use force to subdue you, other people will say I am bullying the weak. Because of this, I will give you ample time to prepare magic. If you can receive my sword blow, this incident will be disregarded. If not, I will request for you to leave the troops and the institution."

"Senior, this incident is not as simple as what Freud had stated," Ma Liang spoke up.

Ye Yin Zhu suddenly grabbed his shoulder and shook his head at him. Turning back to face Oliveira, he said, "I will receive your sword blow, but I don't need preparation." The influence of the Bamboo Sect's distinct, natural loftiness and unyielding character quietly arose. When confronting challenges, Ye Yin Zhu would never cower. Oliveira gave him a feeling that was nothing like Freud's. At least, it seemed he would be fair.

"Are you telling me you want fairly receive my attack without preparation?" Oliveira's eyes exuded a hint of admiration.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't say anything, just nodding.

"Elder Brother, forget about it." Rolande unknowingly made her way through the crowd and pulled on Oliveira's armor.

Oliveira looked at her with some amazement. He softly said, "Little sister, are you saying you don't want to teach this boy a lesson? Why? Are you regretful?"

Rolande's charming face reddened. She stammered, "Do you not know Freud's character? He is an arrogant monkey. We're about to set out on the journey, so let's not cause trouble."

Oliveira sternly said, "What I said cannot be changed. This you ought to know. In front of so many fellow students, don't tell me you want me to retreat? How can I continue to lead this group if I do so? Little sister, step aside." Rolande wanted to say something, but he merely pushed her lightly into the crowd.

"I will receive your sword blow on behalf of Ye Yin Zhu." An ice-cold voice rang out from an unknown location. A black figure flashed to Ye Yin Zhu's side like lightning, his viper-like, icy glare had Oliveira's heart involuntarily shivering. An intangible killing intent pierced him like a sharp dagger, immobilizing his body.

"Sura." The one who came to Ye Yin Zhu's was Sura. With his attire, his current and past image was substantially different. Foregoing the school uniform, he wore gray warrior garments that completely covered him from head to toe. His short hair was neatly combed backwards, and his whole body seemed tightly coiled as he attentively watched Oliveira, like a cheetah ready to pounce on his prey.

"Assassin division?" Oliveira looked at this average-looking youth with more or less the same amazement he had towards Ye Yin Zhu. He didn't expect an underclassman to be able to pressure him. This murderous spirit was like a killer essence forged over countless kills. Perhaps this student's strength was inferior to his own, but an assassin strikes like lightning. He was definitely extremely strong.

"First-year Assassin, Sura."

Oliveira was emotionally moved, saying, "So you are the assassin purported to be a once-in-a-century genius. You want to replace Ye Yin Zhu and receive my

blow?”

Sura coldly said, “I don’t think Ye Yin Zhu is at fault. You aren’t qualified to enforce this so-called law.”

Oliveira indifferently said, “As captain, I am in charge of everyone participating in this next war. If you want, challenge me anytime. Ye Yin Zhu’s punishment, however, cannot be replaced.”

“Then you’ll have to get pass me.” Sura’s left hand slowly raised the black Angel’s Sigh from his chest, unaware that his roommate had firmly grabbed his thin left wrist. His back was slightly arched, and his feet was in a strange T-shaped position. That murderous spirit suddenly increased tremendously, the originally icy aura seemingly becoming even colder.

“Sura, it’s my business; I can do it myself.” Ye Yin Zhu grabbed Sura’s shoulder and lightly pulled Sura behind him as he advanced a few steps forward. He walked up to Oliveira.

Sura was pulled behind Ye Yin Zhu’s body, causing his body to suddenly stiffen. One should know that with an assassin’s stored potential, any contact from others will set off their attack. When Ye Yin Zhu grabbed his shoulder, however, Sura felt a vigorous dou qi flash through, immobilizing his body. That tenacious dou qi unexpectedly sealed off his aura of death, making him unable to explosively attack. ‘When did Yin Zhu’s dou qi become so powerful?’

He rapidly realized, however, that this was Ye Yin Zhu telling him, ‘I don’t need your worry.’

Oliveira nodded towards Ye Yin Zhu. “A true man has the courage to accept the consequences of his actions.”

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t say much, only asking the surrounding students, “Can you lend me a sword? Thanks.”

Lend him a sword? The nearby students were all elites from every grade at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, but they currently had an enormous question mark above their heads. They all mentally thought, ‘You’re a mage! What are you going to do with a borrowed sword?’

“Idol, borrow my sword.” Just as Nesta was about to step up, someone else

had already placed their own sword in Ye Yin Zhu’s hand.

“You?” Ye Yin Zhu looked at the other in amazement. He happened to have met this person, Fisichella, when he’d guided Ye Yin Zhu to the Mixed Residential District. He had even told Ye Yin Zhu to introduce him to the beautiful girls of the Divine Music division.

“Me. Idol, I didn’t expect you to be so strong! Not only did you enter the Divine Music division, you even became the champion of the Freshman Competition! You really do deserve to be my idol. I, your little brother, am also engaging in this war and humbly ask you to take care of me. I unfortunately lost in the semifinals to Ma Liang; otherwise

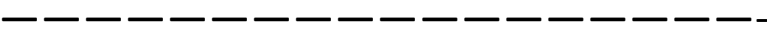
Ye Yin Zhu’s heart was moved. Losing the semifinals to Ma Liang... that meant Fisichella should have been the first-year Heavy Sword division general.

The sword in his hand was approximately 40 kilograms. The thick blade was about 1.5 meters long, and the dark sword’s edge blunt. It was a very standard sword that was given out. Using this type of heavy sword definitely wouldn’t require a sharp blade.

Fisichella stepped back. Ye Yin Zhu carried Fisichella’s sword with the blade pointed at the ground as his left hand beckoned Oliveira to start.

Behind Oliveira, Freud hatefully said, “This plebeian doesn’t even know how to hold a sword.” He had actually forgotten that his body and the sword didn’t have much of a difference weight-wise and that Ye Yin Zhu had just casually tossed him aside a moment ago.

Chapter 28 – Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander (III)



Pure yellow dou qi ignited around Ye Yin Zhu’s body. The four fingers of his right hand clenched the sword, his gaze firmly and carefully examining his opponent.

Oliveira was amazed to discover that Ye Yin Zhu just stood there without revealing any flaws. He sent forth his pressure towards him, but it proved

ineffective. How could Oliveira have known that with Ye Yin Zhu's spiritual force, it was impossible for Ye Yin Zhu to feel any pressure unless the person was at least five ranks above him.

Waving his right hand, a light indigo radiance emerged. Oliveira's rice straw-like sword appeared in his grasp, the sword blade resting on his shoulder lightly. An indigo sphere of light flashed psychedelically before immediately flying up into the sky, causing cries of alarm to ring out. Primary Level Indigo Rank. Primary Level Indigo Rank; he deserved to be called the strongest student at Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.

His strength had already reached the level of a Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander, and when his Gigantic Dragon reached rank 8, he could then become a Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander.

"Take care." Oliveira stood motionless, gripping his sword one-handed. He raised it with lightning-speed, the movement ripping the air apart with a sharp hiss. Light indigo dou qi condensed, and in a flash, the sword hacked at empty space. Immediately, a dazzlingly beautiful indigo arc of light flew straight for Ye Yin Zhu's right shoulder. The powerful dou qi was like a roaring tsunami; in the blink of an eye, the air between the two was sliced into nothingness by this blow. With the air around him sealed, even if Ye Yin Zhu dodged it would be useless.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't dodge and instead swung the sword in his right hand. Although yellow dou qi appeared to be significantly inferior to indigo dou qi, he was the one who grasped the heavy sword and suddenly released seven beacons of lights that soared into the sky.

Everyone's eyes widened as they watched this scene play out. Apart from Ma Liang and Chang Hao, who were amazed by Ye Yin Zhu's dou qi, the others believed that Ye Yin Zhu was done for. The disparity between Yellow Rank and Indigo Rank was truly immense. Behind Oliveira's body, Freud even began to rejoice at Ye Yin Zhu's misfortune.

The yellow and indigo lights collided in a flash.

Hong—hong—hong—hong—hong—hong—hong—!

The seven notes echoed out simultaneously, whilst the tremendous wave of dou qi pushed the nearby students three meters away from the two fighters in

the center.

The lights and shadows of dou qi vanished. Ye Yin Zhu still stood in his spot, but the sword had been sent flying from his hand, landing ten meters away. Even though Oliveira was also standing in his original location, he was dumbstruck. A dark-green brilliance was pointed directly at his Adam's apple, the ice-cold aura causing him to be prudent and not to act impulsively. The end of the sharp silk thread of radiance was held in Ye Yin Zhu's other hand.

In a direct clash, Ye Yin Zhu would lose. As even if he moved at the speed of light and sent out seven attacks, in the end, his dou qi, which was the equivalent of a Intermediate Level Cyan Rank, was not a match for Primary Level Indigo Rank. His Jade Silk, however, threatened Oliveira's throat the moment the collision ended. If he wanted, he could concentrate his dou qi through the Jade Silk and pierce Oliveira's throat at any time. The supple and strong Jade Silk was now sharper than a pointed needle.

"I don't know if this can be considered as receiving Senior's one sword blow; is it?" Ye Yin Zhu tranquilly asked.

Oliveira's eyes displayed anger and fear, but he did not dare to move. He knew that as fast as he could release his dou qi, this person could release his own even faster. "You dare to cheat?" He had looked down upon Ye Yin Zhu, so he hadn't used any sort of technique when attacking. He absolutely didn't expect a Divine Music mage to actually have this kind of attack strategy, however.

"Enough. You already lost," an aged voice rang out. It was unknown when an extra person had come to the training field.

Wearing a set of magical armor forged from mixing violet-gold and mithril, this person released an intensely powerful pressure that forced Ye Yin Zhu to channel dou qi into his Jade Silk to prevent the immense pressure from making it soft. He withdrew his hand.

Hair as white as snow hung down the back of this man's head. He turned his back to Ye Yin Zhu, and with both hands behind his back, he faced Oliveira.

"Grandfather." Oliveira shamefully lowered his head.

"Oliveira, I am disappointed in you. Do you know where you lost? You lost in

arrogance. What is even more shameful is, as a member of the Violet Clan, you lost and yet refuse to recognize your loss. I, Maldini, as the generalissimo of the empire, strip your qualifications to be the captain of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts group. You will be replaced by Ye Yin Zhu.”

“Ah! No—grandfather, how can this be allowed?” Oliveira cried out.

“Why can’t this be allowed? Give me reason.” The aged voice was now brimming with power, causing everyone to feel suffocated; no one dared to speak.

Oliveira hesitantly said, “Because, because I only said I wanted him to receive my sword blow, not to duel. If it was a genuine duel, I wouldn’t have given him a chance.”

“Humph. I fear you still don’t clearly see. Ye Yin Zhu’s right hand only has four fingers. You should understand the difference between four fingers and five fingers. Although I don’t know how he accomplished this, but from the exchange of moves I saw just then, if he had five fingers, he definitely would have been able to grip the heavy sword tightly.”

Only then did Oliveira see that Ye Yin Zhu’s right hand really was missing its pinky. His heart immediately became ice-cold. Indigo Rank losing to a Yellow Rank... in his heart, this was really hard to accept.

“Oliveira, let me ask you. On the battlefield, would an enemy give you a fair fight? Especially if your opponent is weaker than you. If you think this, then it won’t be long before you become another corpse on the battlefield.” Maldini’s voice became even more severe.

Oliveira’s gaze gradually changed. He said, ashamed, “Grandfather, I understand. I accept your punishment and yield the captainship. But in order for the students of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts to be compatible with the army, I request for you to allow me to hold the position of vice-captain to aid Ye Yin Zhu.”

Maldini smiled. “Good, now this is my grandson.” After he said this, he slowly turned around.

When Ye Yin Zhu looked at Maldini’s appearance, his eyes widened with shock.

The intense paralysis his right hand suffered from the collision seemed to disappear all of a sudden.

The generalissimo of Milan Empire, the Violet Clan head, the Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander, the most well-known, powerful figure on the continent—Maldini. Maldini had numerous medals he unexpectedly recognized.

“Old horse, it’s you?” Yes, that was right. This violet-gold armor-wearing Maldini was the elder who had visited Floating Orchid Pavilion every day to listen to him play, the old horse who was abnormally respectful towards Anya!

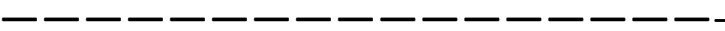
Maldini smiled. “It is I. Yin Zhu, you have once again given me a pleasant surprise. I didn’t expect your martial arts to be just as remarkable as your zither music.

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu’s soul gradually returned. “Hello, Generalissimo Maldini.”

Maldini nodded towards him and then turned to face all the students going to war for Milan. He profoundly said, “Just now, the words I told Oliveira, you should all have heard. I did not direct it only at him; at the same time, it was for all of you. I must impress upon you that the battlefield is not a trifling matter. Amongst you, many possess a profound background, an extraordinary background. On the battlefield, however, these cannot assist you. I want all of you to survive the cruelty of war, so you can only rely on yourself and your comrades. Therefore, I hope all of you will become one cohesive unit. For the honor of the empire, follow me and set off.”

“Yes, Generalissimo!” Everyone was provoked by Maldini’s impassioned words, especially the warriors. Everyone stood at attention and saluted.

Chapter 28 – Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander (IV)



Maldini turned towards Ye Yin Zhu. “Now, you are their captain. Your only assignment is to lead your comrades. When they enter the battlefield to attack the enemy, try your utmost to bring them all back alive. Troops, fall in!”

Fall in? Ye Yin Zhu blanked out. Since he cultivated the Pure Zither Heart from infancy, just like the other mages, he completely didn't understand military commands! Fortunately, Oliveira reacted quickly and shouted loudly for the troops to line up. In this formation, everyone followed behind Maldini, leaving the central training field. The newly appointed Captain Ye Yin Zhu was pulled by Oliveira to the very front of the ranks.

Like this, his first war campaign began.

It was also this war that started this era's Zither Emperor's gradual walk into the limelight.

Maldini didn't follow the Dragon Cavalry regiment that was heading towards Sacred Heart City. As generalissimo, he rode his rank 9 Gigantic Dragon and rushed towards the front lines first. Ye Yin Zhu and the students travelled along with the Dragon Cavalry regiment of a thousand members, which was commanded by one of Maldini's two grandsons, the Milan Empire's youngest Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander Okafur. Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander Austin was also among the ranks. This branch of Dragon Cavalry could be said to belong to the Violet Clan.

After joining the Dragon Cavalry regiment, Ye Yin Zhu realized that the hundred students from the institution was equivalent to a middle squadron, with him as the captain. Of course, he didn't believe those students would listen to him. For this bit, Oliveira was significantly better than him.

All of the mages sat in the good quality carriages the Institution had provided whilst the warriors and assassins each rode their own Maginot Iron Dragon or Earthbound Swift Dragon, also provided by the Institution. The only educational establishment on the continent with this financial ability was probably the Milan Institution of Magic and Martial Arts.

The journey was dull and tedious. Originally, with the Dragon Cavalry's speed, it would only take 10 days to reach Sacred Heart City. With the inclusion of the slower carriages of mages, however, they would take at least 20 days before reaching the borders of Sacred Heart City.

"Ye Yin Zhu." Oliveira jumped off his Earthbound Swift Dragon, the troops following Oliveira's order to temporary rest.

“Oliveira, what’s up?” It had been 20 days, and Ye Yin Zhu hadn’t run into anything troublesome. Through interaction, he gradually realized that Oliveira was a pretty good man. In addition, Oliveira’s ability to inspire respect in the military was far better than his own. From following Oliveira, he had learned many things. In truth, he was captain only in name as Oliveira still completed the majority of a captain’s duties. Everything was arranged clearly and orderly.

Oliveira walked and sat down beside Ye Yin Zhu. He glanced at Sura, who was on the other side of Ye Yin Zhu, before saying, “I estimate that we’ll reach Sacred Heart City by nightfall. I heard Second Brother say that our next mission is to provide assistance to defense. It will probably be the defenses of a small town on the west side of Sacred Heart City. Yin Zhu, shouldn’t you, as captain, help me by taking a bit more of the many responsibilities?!”

Ye Yin Zhu laughed and said, “Elder Brother Oliveira, aren’t your plans excellent? I don’t know how to do anything, so how can I help you?”

Oliveira smiled. “Don’t say you don’t know anything. Last time, you defeated me. Honestly, I’ve been looking for an opportunity to apologize to you. I thoroughly understand Freud’s character. That day, however, I had seized the opportunity to flare up, wanting to see the strength of the freshman who defeated my younger sister. The past is the past; I want to erase any grudges you may hold in your heart.”

“It was not that simple. You might have also wanted to conveniently teach Yin Zhu a lesson then, am I right,” Sura spoke up from the other side.

Oliveira somewhat awkwardly said, “But I became the person getting taught a lesson, no?”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, “It’s alright. In fact, I also pulled a fast one. Elder Brother Oliveira, I have learnt a lot from following you these days, especially on how difficult it is to command an army.”

Oliveira smiled. “Although you are not as good as I am at unifying the troops, your level of talent is something I have never seen before. Especially your comprehension and recollection. I almost want to say that you can remember and fully comprehend everything you see. It would be better if you joined our Heavy Cavalry division. That way, our division’s Dean Tie Bi will surely consider

you as his own son. When that time comes, you will be able to become the number one in the institution after I graduate.”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “No. I cultivate dou qi merely as a supplement to my magic. I am a Divine Music mage.”

Oliveira disapprovingly shrugged. To him, how could a Divine Music mage compare to a Dragon Cavalryman?

“Yin Zhu, I want to ask you something. That day, how did you suppress me? During our dou qi collision, the resulting shockwave basically should’ve prevented you from attacking again!”

Ye Yin Zhu somewhat bashfully said, “I merely pulled a cheap trick. My weapon is very light. By pouring dou qi into it, the shockwave couldn’t affect it.”

“Oh, so it’s like this. No wonder I was duped!” After saying this, he suddenly lowered his voice. “Actually, I also wanted to ask you an important question. Yin Zhu, how did you make my younger sister surrender in the end?”

“Eh? Rolande surrender? Where did this come from?” Ye Yin Zhu looked at him in amazement.

Oliveira laughed mischievously and said, “I know my younger sister’s temperament very well. You had previously injured her, but she doesn’t consider you a foe, which is amazing. That day, she even spoke up for you. It’s clear that her feelings towards you aren’t ordinary.”

“Assemble! Prepare to set off.” A deep, resounding shout interrupted Ye Yin Zhu and Oliveira’s discussion. In the distance, on the back of a Yellow Gigantic Earth Dragon, was a person whose height surpassed 2.5 meters. With dark colored skin and golden armor, this high-ranking military officer raised his seven meter long dragonspear. This was Major Okafur.

Okafur was a taciturn man of little words. For the entire journey he had spoken awfully little, only commanding the Dragon Cavalry regiment to continue onward. The entire Dragon Cavalry regiment was very organized. Ye Yin Zhu could clearly sense this Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander’s powerful strength. His dragon mount alone possessed rank 8 strength.

Oliveira had been receiving military education since a young age, so he didn’t

dare to slight his orders. He hurried to his own provided Earthbound Swift Dragon and lead the Institution's squadron to follow the regiment's departure.

Ye Yin Zhu and Sura sat within a carriage. The mages have had an extremely relaxing time this entire journey. Although their carriages were often rattled, it was a lot better than the conditions of the Dragon Cavalry, who rode with the buffeting wind and sun's rays.

There were a total of five carriages, each with eight people. Ye Yin Zhu's vehicle was full, but they also had the assassin Sura, making it a bit crowded. Apart from the two men, the carriage also held Hai Yang, Xiang Luan, and a few other upper-year mages.

On the carriage, Ye Yin Zhu took out the journal Ferguson gave him, thumbing through it. During these 20 days, he was probably the only person who didn't feel lonely. Ferguson's journal held notes on Spiritual Magic cultivation and extremely detailed accounts on his combat experiences, which made Yin Zhu's eyes widen. Although he couldn't directly use Spiritual Magic, he could still learn a great deal of knowledge.

Soon after the troops began to set off together, the sound of rushing hooves against the ground echoed distantly.

"Delivering orders from Generalissimo Maldini to Okafur's Dragon Cavalry regiment: Immediately depart west, 250 kilometers away from Sacred Heart City to defend Konya City. No delay."

"Affirmative." Okafur's deep voice rang out.

The mages within the five carriages all sighed in unison. They had originally believed they were on the verge of arriving at Sacred Heart City, where they could then rest, but now they had to spend another two days on the road.

Chapter 29 – A Startling Hunt (I)

“No way, we still have to hurry? This weather is indeed damnably cold.” Pulling on a thick fur cloak, Xiang Luan sighed, already regretting her participation in this war.

Hai Yang touched her shoulder, whispering, “Since we’re already here, we must exercise patience.” Her complexion had significantly improved since the first time she had participated in Ye Yin Zhu’s treatment. The scar on her face was still covered by her long hair, but these past weeks, Ye Yin Zhu would use his Divine Acupuncture Vein Treatment on her every 10 days. Including yesterday, she had 4 treatments completed altogether. With the brimming vitality of the Violet Bamboo Needles unceasingly treating her, Hai Yang’s originally numb face began to regain feeling. She was even able to clearly see her withered flesh rejuvenating.

Xiang Luan unhappily said, “But this is extremely trying. Yin Zhu, wouldn’t things be better if you play us a song?”

Ye Yin Zhu helplessly said, “The carriage is shaking too much; I can’t play like this! Senior Xiang Luan, you can only be patient and wait.”

Sura sighed lightly. “It seems like this time, we’re making the trip to the military front in vain.”

Ye Yin Zhu was confused. “Why do you say that?”

Sura elaborated, “Did you not just hear the order? We’re being transferred to Konya City. I know that place. Even though it is a state of the Milan Empire that borders the Northern Wasteland, to the north of Konya City is a mountain range that continuously rises and falls with a maximum height that surpasses two kilometers at the very least. The beastmen must be out of their minds; otherwise, they would have never chosen to attack this place through the mountains. When we reach the military front, I’m afraid we might be just going through simple formalities. Whether we can even see those beastmen is questionable.”

Xiang Luan commented, “You can’t only say it like that. The army must also

take into consideration who they are sending. You know, amongst our group of students, there are many who are members of the Empire's three greatest clans. If the issue of survival on the battlefield is brought up, then there are many we cannot afford to lose. Only, seeing beastmen is still an opportunity. As far as I know, when the end of the annual Autumnal Defensive War approaches, the Institution's students that were at the war will be allowed to watch a few battles of the final military campaign. The warriors defending might even be able to participate in a few small scale charges, while us mages might have the opportunity to cast a few spells."

Sura frowned. "Do you believe something like this is considered participation in a war?"

Xiang Luan smiled and said, "The institution's objective is merely to give us more experience. Don't tell me you thought we would actually stake our lives in this, when the average age of us youths is approximately 18? If you are remarkable enough, maybe in 10 years you can come here and lead troops. But Sura, you really know a lot more than most people. This Konya City is clearly a small area."

Sura's face changed slightly, and he lowered his head, silent.

In fact, the one who was most depressed was Okafur. As a Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander, not only was he unable to go to war, he also had to babysit these aristocratic students. He was immensely depressed, but the order came from his grandfather. Even with his rank, he could only execute it.

Two days later, the Dragon Cavalry defense regiment of eleven hundred troops finally arrived at the military post of Konya City.

They could not deny that Konya City was a pretty good region, or at least for a region situated in the north. The small city wasn't even a third of the size of Milan City, and it had a pitiful population of only twenty thousand. This cold region was close to the Northern Wasteland, so the majority of Konya City's residents relied on hunting to make a living.

Just as Sura had said, to the north of the city was a continuously peaking mountain range. Although it didn't take up a lot of space, its elevation did surpass two kilometers. With such a precipitous topography, it became almost

unnecessary for the city to guard this natural defense. At the same time, due to the existence of those alpine, the majority of cold streams coming from the north were blocked by the mountains, making the climate of Konya City significantly more bearable compared to other northern cities of the Milan Empire.

After arriving, Okafur immediately took over the city's defense. The original five hundred soldiers in charge of the city's defense were apparently useless to him. After assigning the Institution's students some tasks, he gloomily led five hundred Dragon Cavalrymen to begin patrolling the nearby mountains immediately. As an outstanding and high-ranked military officer, he could not overlook small details and be careless. At the same time, patrolling the mountains would give him a way to vent his aggravation.

The sixty student warriors from the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts were ordered to stay behind with the remaining five hundred Dragon Cavalrymen to patrol and guard the city. As mages, Ye Yin Zhu and the others were idle, resting everyday in the warm barracks. They were willing to help with anything, but no one asked for them. As noble mages, even the Dragon Cavalrymen held respect for them. After all, mages' powers were highly important in a war.

A cascade of news came from the frontlines. The war had begun on the fifth day Ye Yin Zhu and the others had arrived in Konya City.

"All of you, listen up." Oliveira stood in the large tent, his finger pointed at the map of the battlefield as he said, "The beastmen's plundering isn't the genuine start of war. In order to gain more benefits, they also need to force us to be unable to defend against more than one front. Generally speaking, their troops will be divided into units of a hundred beastmen in order to hasten the speed and advance of their Wolf Cavalry's plundering. They would steal provisions before immediately fleeing far away. We would be overwhelmed by their large army, forcing us to retreat at once. To them, as long as they acquire enough food, it's a victory."

In Konya City, even Oliveira was soon unable to endure the silence. Okafur had still not returned, and he suspected that his second older brother and his five hundred Dragon Cavalrymen had sneaked into the frontlines. Helpless, he could

only use the barracks' battlefield map to give the other students a lesson on how the Autumnal Defensive War worked.

In regards to Oliveira's lecture, the majority of the students who were interested were warriors; only Ye Yin Zhu was an exception as he was genuinely interested in military matters, especially in all of Oliveira's diverse examples of battles. Right at this moment, he stood beside Oliveira. "So how should we deal with this?"

Oliveira explained, "The border between us and the Northern Wasteland is excessively long, so it's impossible for us to defend the entire battlefield. The plan uses thirty armies, which consists of three hundred thousand soldiers in total. Sacred Heart City serves as the core, and every fifty kilometers from that core will be guarded by an army. This forms a large network; we will then wait for the enemy to walk right into the trap.

"Of course, we cannot completely defend against it all, as there are always some beastmen who are able to successfully steal food. Nothing can be done about this. The Beastmen are extremely reckless. If they are forced into a corner, heaven knows what they will do. In order to guard against a possible beastmen military attack, we stationed two hundred thousand elite troops in Sacred Heart City, including five thousand Dragon Cavalrymen. This is in case a large-scale beastmen attack occurs. Our main force can then take their frontal assault head on." Saying this, he brandished a clenched fist, as if he was leading the war effort.

The others listened to him, either enthralled or reflective, but Ye Yin Zhu posed another question. "Elder Brother Oliveira, how does our army and the beastmen army compare qualitatively?"

Oliveira displayed a proud gaze as he replied, "The beastmen army is decentralized. Internally, they are divided into ten tribes. Amongst these tribes, seven or eight can be considered strong. Each tribe has its own sphere of influence. Among these, the Thor tribe of the Mjolnir Stronghold is the strongest. They have an army of roughly forty thousand.

"The other tribes are smaller. In total, the beastmen army is probably not less than two million in number. Not only are they hostile with our Milan, they are

also confronting the Ascoli Kingdom and the Florence Kingdom. Our territory has stationed five hundred thousand permanent troops on this frontier, Ascoli has sent an additional two hundred thousand, and Florence three hundred thousand. Altogether, there are one million soldiers.”

Chapter 29 – A Startling Hunt (II)

Ye Yin Zhu said, “In other words, our army merely amounts to half of the beastmen’s?”

Oliveira nodded his head and said, “Yes. Honestly speaking, a beastmen’s fighting strength is very strong. They can bring practically the entire nation to arms; with naturally tough physique, it allows the majority of them to be powerful warriors. It’s a pity they’re not good at sieges, and that their intelligence is relatively low. They also don’t have outstanding technology like us. Thus, even if they have greater numbers, it is impossible for them to defeat us.

“Of course, relying on these three main points to stop them doesn’t mean we would want to attack. The Northern Wasteland is a damnable region; only those beastmen with their natural physique can survive there. As a result, we only need to ward off enough of the beastmen’s invasion. Although it is unlikely our temporary location will have conflict, we still cannot relax. A battlefield can experience countless changes, nobody can predict whether they will need us. Is that not right?”

“Yin Zhu.” At this moment, Sura animatedly came running in from outside. “Again, you’re here listening to Oliveira’s lectures! I really don’t understand; you’re a mage, so why are you interested in military affairs?”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled slightly and said, “Naturally, it’s because I feel that military stratagems are also an art! Elder Brother Oliveira spoke of these battle precedents, all of which are so marvelous. It’s like a story.” Since he was a child, every day he would only play the zither. Although he obtained strength that far exceeded an ordinary person’s, he also lost many joys of childhood. Each of Oliveira’s speeches on military matters felt like an action-packed story to him, often causing him to be immersed in the narrative.

“Come on, we can go look around.” Sura tugged on Ye Yin Zhu’s sleeve, wanting to head outside.

“Sura...” Ye Yin Zhu looked somewhat awkwardly at him.

Oliveira laughed loudly and commented, “What Sura said is right. As a mage, it is unlikely you will order troops. Go have fun. In all honesty, I also feel vexed staying here. Elder Brother and Second Brother are both frustrating... throwing me here alone.”

Reluctantly, Ye Yin Zhu followed Sura outside.

“Yin Zhu, let’s go hunting. Although it’s already late autumn, Konya City is still encircled by an alpine region. The mountainous forests would surely have many animals. Let’s go hunt for a few animals to bring back; we can also make everyone feel better with food. What do you think?”

Looking at Sura’s excited appearance, Ye Yin Zhu immediately agreed. Honestly speaking, he was still an immature youngster at heart despite having already broken through to the Pure Zither Heart Realm.

“Okay, but we have to return early. If the others knew I left the group to have fun, it would not be good.”

Sura laughed, saying, “You are captain only in name, that’s all. That day, however, I didn’t expect Old Horse to actually be the the generalissimo of the empire, Maldini. He appears to favor you very much, so from now on, you won’t need to worry about the Violet Clan. Quick, we need to secretly slip away so the others won’t know.”

“What are you two up to?” A pleasant voice echoed out, immediately startling Ye Yin Zhu and Sura. The two of them simultaneously turned around to find that Xiang Luan and Hai Yang had arrived behind them without them noticing.

Xiang Luan was attired in a thick pink fur cloak made of some unknown material. It made her appear delicate and refined, accentuating her stunning looks by making them more prominent and touching. Hai Yang was also attired in a fur cloak, but it was silvery-white in color. Her black hair was bundled into the fur cloak, and her fringe still covered her face.

“We’re not doing anything.” Sura’s face didn’t change as he spoke.

Xiang Luan hummed and said, “I overheard what you guys said, so don’t deny it. Going out to have fun and not telling us, what extremely horrible younger brothers.”

Sura spluttered. “Miss Xiang Luan, we aren’t your younger brothers in the first place!”

Xiang Luan’s charming face reddened as she said, “Nevermind. I’m almost dying of boredom here. If you two go out to have fun, you have to take Hai Yang and I along as well. If not, I will lodge complaints against you two, especially the captain for scurrying off sneakily.”

Ye Yin Zhu and Sura glanced at each other. “We are going into the forest. As mages, your bodies might not be able to endure the trip.”

Xiang Luan smiled cheerfully and said, “We are mages, yet don’t you have martial arts techniques? With you two here, how can we be afraid of meeting with misfortune? If you want to go, then we should quickly go now.”

What began as a two-person trip became a four-person party as they stealthily sneaked out of Konya City, heading north to the relatively flat mountain forest terrain.

When they had just set off, Xiang Luan and Hai Yang were both rather excited as they had been feeling oppressed after several days with nothing to do. A short while later, however, the mages’ weak constitutions made their appearance.

“Let’s rest for a moment, I can’t walk anymore.” Xiang Luan’s frail voice cried out; she was no longer willing to continue walking no matter what anyone said.

Sura unhappily said, “I already said you two should not come, but you didn’t listen. We only just left, and I want to find some wild animals. I also don’t know how long we’ll need to walk. Why don’t you both head back first; there’s still time.”

Xiang Luan glared at him and said, “What? Are you looking down on me?” Her beautiful eyes exuded a trace of hidden bitterness. Ye Yin Zhu was watching on and couldn’t help but be confused. “We already came, so we will definitely follow through to the end. Ye Yin Zhu, you can pull me along; isn’t your dou qi very powerful? It should be no problem for you.”

“I...” Ye Yin Zhu blushed; he didn’t know whether he should agree or not. Xiang Luan had already taken the initiative, however, and had taken his hand.

Xiang Luan’s small hand was soft and warm, her fingers slim, smooth, and tender. When Ye Yin Zhu felt that small hand slip into his, his face immediately flushed a deep red. His heartbeat accelerated, and he nervously stiffened.

Xiang Lian giggled. She deliberately leaned against Ye Yin Zhu as she said, “You truly deserve to be called our Divine Music division’s first innocent shota! Yin Zhu, have you never held a girl’s hand?”

Smelling her faintly sweet fragrance, Ye Yin Zhu guilelessly nodded and said, “Indeed; I indeed haven’t.”

Looking at his honest and embarrassed appearance, Xiang Luan couldn’t help but laugh heartily at the top of her voice. “You really are very cute! It seems that boys like you may have gone extinct. In other words, I’m very honored. Your hand has a very powerful grip for only having four fingers. It is truly peculiar. Hai Yang, I’ll let you have his other. We can continue on the journey.”

Hai Yang lowered her head, but she didn’t say anything. She merely extended her small, ice-cold hand to grip Ye Yin Zhu’s other hand. Her hand was a little smaller than Xiang Luan’s and very cold. When she reached out to grab Ye Yin Zhu’s hand, her small hand trembled slightly, bringing out a person’s instincts to protect her.

Warmth and cold, these two different sensations flooded Ye Yin Zhu’s heart at the same time. For a moment, he was dazed. Although the north region’s late autumn season was very cold, right now his whole body was boiling. He was itching to find an icy lake to jump into in order to feel comfortable.

Sura’s eyes exuded a somewhat peculiar light as he spoke with a little anger, “What are you two doing? My dou qi is also pretty good, so why aren’t you looking to me?”

Xiang Luan smiled. “Because you aren’t as fresh and pure as Yin Zhu! At least I can be certain that he won’t have any impure thoughts. You, I cannot be certain of. Not only that, you are petite, which makes it impossible for you to take both of us.”

Sura argued, “Even if I can’t protect two of you, I can still protect one of you.”

Xiang Luang shrugged. “Sorry, but I don’t want you to take me. Hai Yang, what about you?”

Hai Yang didn’t say a word, merely shaking her head—making her opinion clearly known.

“Sura, I...”

Chapter 29 – A Startling Hunt (III)

A/N: TJSS would like to promote a very good historical novel; if you are interested, please take a look. It is upcoming Chinese author Angel Oscar’s newest masterpiece, << Seizing Clarity >>.

天使奥斯卡《篡清》

“There’s no need to explain. Let’s go.” Sura ferociously glared at Ye Yin Zhu from the corner of his eye before he soared up into the sky, taking point as they sprinted towards the mountainous forest.

Ye Yin Zhu helplessly pulled Xiang Luan and Hai Yang up into the sky, his movements awkward. His substantial advancement in dou qi allowed for his speed to rise imperceptibly high. Although he was carrying two others, following Sura wasn’t very difficult. Xiang Luan and Hai Yang merely felt a soft dou qi pulsing from Ye Yin Zhu’s hand, the dou qi supporting their bodies and making them feel weightless. Their surroundings passed by at a rapid pace nonstop. Although it was somewhat cold, this kind of intimate flying made them feel truly excited.

Following up the sloping mountainside, Ye Yin Zhu and Sura continuously ploughed through. In half an hour, they had already arrived at an elevation of 1000 meters. The mountain’s temperature was much colder, but the air was much fresher as well.

“This feels wonderful~!” Xiang Luan breathed out, leaning against Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder. “What are we going to do next?”

Walking ahead, Sura surveyed the nearby mountain. “Yi, so many wild

animals?”

Ye Yin Zhu followed him and looked in the other direction as well. Sure enough, in the forests of the other mountain, a great amount of beasts could be seen. Not only that, the beasts were facing and moving towards them. They varied in size, but they all appeared to be in somewhat of a panic.

“Let’s go!” Sura shouted, his body already shooting forward like an arrow. Like a gray bolt of lightning, he had charged into the mountain in the blink of an eye. Even though Ye Yin Zhu’s speed had increased astonishingly upon his advancement to Yellow Rank Level 5, he couldn’t help but gasp in amazement.

Xiang Luan cried out, “So fast! He truly is of the Assassin division. Yin Zhu, we need to go quickly and take a look!”

“Right.” Ye Yin Zhu once again increased the circulation of his dou qi, chasing after Sura’s ascent up the mountain. Going down the mountain was naturally easier than going up. He only needed his dou qi to pay attention to their bodies before he jumped down the mountain peak, relying on only his physical strength. While Xiang Luan and Hai Yang cried out in alarm, they arrived at the base of the mountain in merely a few moments.

Sura was already on the move, his lightning-quick figure weaving in and out of the mountainous forest. Because of his rapid moves, his body flickered like an illusion. Her right hand held a black dagger, and with every twist of Sura’s body, a beast would fall to the ground, dead. Ye Yin Zhu clearly saw Sura’s dagger slice across the beast’s throats. Those beasts were unable to even shriek, as their throats were already violently spraying blood everywhere. Regardless of the size, no beast was actually able to resist Sura’s strikes. Sura seemed to be venting his frustrations from before. In merely a few breaths’ time, he had already felled an additional 10 beasts. The cold air immediately reeked of blood.

Observing this massacre, Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t refrain from feeling ill at ease. He wanted to call out to Sura, but Sura’s actions were indeed too swift. His gaze was unable to even catch Sura’s figure.

“Wow! So violent... I have never seen such a violet assassin. It seems he wasn’t just bragging about his dou qi.” Xiang Luan didn’t have difficulty adapting like Ye Yin Zhu; instead, she was very excited. Releasing Ye Yin Zhu’s hand, a flash of

light sparked from her space ring, and her pipa fell into her grasp. Lightly brushing against the strings with her right hand, a green radiance twinkled into existence. Each and every crisp sonic boom exploded against a beast within the mountainous forest.

This was the first time Ye Yin Zhu saw Xiang Luan use magic. Xiang Luan's control over her sonic booms were very precise. Each explosive note immediately caused a wild animal's body to convulse and fall to the ground, dead. The majority of these beasts within the mountain forest were rank 1 magical beasts. Would their remains even be marketable if she continued to kill them with sonic booms? The pipa in her hand rang out, releasing a faint, silvery light. One look and it could be seen that this pipa was not a common device.

Xiang Luan seemed to be competing with Sura. In a short while, their slaughtering had felled over a hundred beasts. Sura's sole reliance on his attack speed amazed Xiang Luan. His attack speed wasn't slower than her plucking, and the amount of kills he had exceeded her own.

Hai Yang hadn't joined in the killing. From beginning to end, she just calmly stood beside Ye Yin Zhu, her small, cold hand nestled warmly in Ye Yin Zhu's own. She gripped his hand awfully tight, as if she was afraid he would run away.

"Sura, Senior Xiang Luan—enough! Although our group is large, we will still not be able to eat this much meat. Don't continue the slaughter!" Ye Yin Zhu yelled. For the most part, the sizes of the beasts weren't small. Although the space ring could completely accommodate them, the excessive hunting would prevent them from eating all of it.

A gray silhouette flashed by. Sura had already returned in front of them, his hand and black dagger untainted by even a speck of blood. His expression was very tranquil, his breathing still smooth. It was as if he hadn't been doing anything.

Xiang Luan continued to release Spiritual magic, but at this moment she was already a little tired. She withdrew her pipa and shot a glance at Sura, saying, "You are indeed a cold-blooded monster."

Sura indifferently replied, "Thank you for the compliment. All assassins are cold-blooded."

Ye Yin Zhu walked forward, Hai Yang following him. As Ye Yin Zhu placed the dead beasts into his space ring, he pensively said, “How come so many beasts appeared here? Guys, look. An unceasing amount of beasts came to this side of the mountain. It’s rapidly approaching winter, yet these beasts aren’t preparing for survival. Could it be that they can’t migrate?” The space ring Anya gave him had a huge empty domain divided into many partitions, so he wasn’t worried about the beast corpses tainting his guqin.

While he was speaking, all sorts of beasts were still moving in their direction. Although Sura and Xiang Luan’s massacre had scared them, they simply bypassed Ye Yin Zhu’s party of four without any signs of retreat.

Sura nodded and said, “This is very abnormal. You guys wait here; I’ll go take a look.”

Ye Yin Zhu hastily said, “Let’s all go together. We can all watch out for one another.” His Pure Zither Heart, which was completely pure, had a bad premonition.

When he was at the Desolate Jade Sea, he would practice the zither every day. His audience back then had been the beasts of the field and birds of the air. He was awfully familiar with the aura of beasts, and at this moment, he clearly sensed the panicked auras within the mountainous forest. To cause such a large amount of beasts to appear within the mountain forest, surely something was about to happen.

Sura glanced at Xiang Luan and Hai Yang before saying, “You take care and protect them in case we run into any powerful beasts. I’ll catch up while you escape with those two first. Yin Bi, manifest.” Sura lightly patted his chest as he spoke those words.

A silvery light sparked, and the meter long small silver dragon, Yin Bi, floated through the air before falling to the ground. Kneading its eye, it gave off a drowsy appearance. Its short and stout body appeared somewhat comical on the ground. Just as it crashed to the ground, it turned around and used its two front claws to hold onto Sura’s thigh. Its round belly was directly attached to his thigh. “No, mama. Outside cold. I want sleep.”

Hearing Yin Bi call Sura ‘mama,’ the corner of Ye Yin Zhu’s mouth involuntarily

quirked up in a smile. Hai Yang and Xiang Luan became lifeless.

Hai Yang cried out faintly, “Is that a dragon?”

Xiang Luan answered her question. “Definitely, that’s definitely a dragon. Not only that, it’s a noble Silver Dragon. It’s so young, yet its ability to speak fully demonstrates its future rank. But, why does it call Sura ‘Mama?’”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, “This small guy just hatched, and the first person it saw was Sura. Maybe because of this, it calls Sura ‘Mama.’”

Chapter 29 – A Startling Hunt (IV)

Xiang Luan doubtfully questioned, “But a dragon’s aura is very sensitive, especially a Genuine Gigantic Dragon. Don’t tell me it made a mistake in differentiating gender? Sura, don’t tell me you also dual-cultivate magic and martial arts? How else would you summon it?”

Sura shook his head and said, “No, I don’t cultivate both magic and martial arts. Yin Bi darling, you haven’t exercised for a long time, sleeping so much isn’t good for your body. If you continue like this, you won’t be a Silver Dragon; you’ll be a silver hog!”

Hearing Sura speak the two words, ‘silver hog,’ Xiang Luan and Hai Yang couldn’t help but giggle. Sura then suddenly realized what ‘silver hog’ was a homonym for¹ and immediately looked at Ye Yin Zhu with embarrassment. Yin Zhu could also only helplessly stare back at him. When the two of them exchanged glances, Sura’s previously murderous and icy gaze quietly warmed up.

As it turns out, after Little Yin Bi’s hatching, Ye Yin Zhu and Sura encountered a lot of problems. Firstly, its maturation required an enormous intake of energy. Secondly, how it followed Sura around was the greatest challenge. After all, its small body couldn’t fly, and Sura didn’t feel safe allowing it to roam outside. With no other choice, the two of them could only raise it in their dormitory. The question still remained, though, of how to deal with this small guy’s tremendous food consumption.

In merely a day, it furtively ate all of Sura and Ye Yin Zhu’s food. Not only that, but it overtly occupied the entirety of Sura’s bed. As a result, Ye Yin Zhu wanted

to have Sura temporarily sleep in the same bed as him, but Sura wouldn't agree. After an awkward moment, they suddenly recalled Anya's other gift when she presented them with Little Yin Bi—those secretive reverse scales. It turned out that those reverse scales were not only mementos of Little Yin Bi's parents, but were also reservoirs for the majority of its parents' energy, which had been funneled into the scales before their deaths.

A Silver Dragon was a magical dragon. Ye Yin Zhu discovered a great deal of magical elements within the reverse scales, so they had tried to draw out those magical elements. Prior to leaving the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, they had succeeded. Unfortunately, only Yin Bi could absorb that tremendous amount of magical elements. Not only could it absorb the magical elements, but Yin Bi could merge with the reverse scales and still allow Sura to maintain a spiritual connection with it. Thus, their problem was easily solved. Not only did they no longer need to worry about feeding Little Yin Bi, they could also carry it around.

Ye Yin Zhu faced Xiang Luan and Hai Yang, explaining, "Sura has a Silver Dragon item that I request you two to keep confidentiality about on his behalf, okay?"

Hai Yang nodded while Xiang Luan enviously said, "You guys are really amazing students. Only a few people can possess a Gigantic Dragon, but Sura even possesses a noble Silver Dragon. Sura, you must tell me: how did you come across a Silver Dragon?"

Sura looked at Ye Yin Zhu and said, "A gift from a friend."

"Oh! A gift from a friend? What friend is so generous? If a friend gave me a Silver Dragon, I can't say for sure whether or not I wouldn't marry him in exchange." Xiang Luan's eyes hadn't left Yin Bi's short and stout body the entire time. She was extremely fond of Yin Bi's adorableness and grandeur. Carefully walking up to Yin Bi, she crouched and lightly caressed its head.

A beautiful woman's destructive power was indeed strong. Not only did this little guy Yin Bi not resist, it even released its front claws from Sura's leg, seemingly enjoying Xiang Luan's caresses. It leaned into her hands, allowing Xiang Luan to cup its body within her hands and hold it close to her chest, and it brazenly gorged itself on her tofu. The playful Xiang Luan couldn't help but issue

a laugh like silver bells.

Sura darkly scolded the little pervert, saying to Xiang Luan, “But you are too late. If you were a few days earlier, that guy might’ve given the Silver Dragon to you.”

Xiang Luan raised her head to look at Sura, her eyes displaying a hopeful light. “Can you introduce me to this generous friend of yours?”

Sura indifferently said, “There’s no need for any introductions. You already know him. Far from being as distant as the ends of the earth, he’s right under your nose. Isn’t he?” Saying this, he pointed at Ye Yin Zhu.

“Your gift?” Not only did this startle Xiang Luan, even Hai Yang directed a look of surprise at Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu somewhat embarrassedly scratched his head and said, “I happened to obtain a Silver Dragon egg by chance. I had no use for it, so I gave it to Sura.”

“How come I don’t have such good luck? Yin Zhu, I’m jealous.”

Ye Yin Zhu really couldn’t bear Xiang Luan’s bitter gaze and hastily said, “Next time it happens, I’ll give it to you, okay?”

Xiang Luan smiled. “Since you have said this, don’t go back on your promise. If you also give me a Silver Dragon, I might really marry you!”

“This...” A burning sensation arose throughout his entire body.

“What? You think I’m not fit to marry you?” Xiang Luan stood up, looking dissatisfied at Ye Yin Zhu.

“No, no!” Ye Yin Zhu hurriedly shook his head.

Xiang Luan suddenly laughed. “You little idiot, look at you! You’re blushing red all over. You don’t need to be so nervous; I was just messing around with you.”

Ye Yin Zhu loosened at this explanation. He realized that warding off Xiang Luan was even harder than facing Nesta’s Blood Soul Spear or Ma Liang’s painting brush.

Xiang Luan apparently had no intention of letting him off. She walked over to Yin Zhu’s side and whispered, “Of course, you also might have a chance after all.

I vowed as a child to marry a hero when I grow up, a genuine hero. If you can truly become the strongest on the continent, one day, maybe... I truly will marry you!"

"Yin Bi, let's go." Sura truly did look as if he was leaving, and he also refused to acknowledge Ye Yin Zhu. He ascended the mountain peak again with Yin Bi. Little Yin Bi passed the time within the reverse scales, absorbing energy. Its body had already grown significantly. Although it still couldn't fly, it could soar and leap with no issue. It jumped onto Sura's shoulder, flapping its wings to lighten its weight and allow Sura to speedily forge onward.

"Seniors, we should go too." One of Ye Yin Zhu's hand took Xiang Luan's hand, while his other hand was still tightly clenched by Hai Yang's small one as she hadn't released her grip on his. He circulated his dou qi, and his body started soaring up into the air and chasing after Sura and Yin Bi as they climbed up the mountain.

Within the mountain forest, the beasts seemed to be ignoring them, solely preoccupied with desperately scattering in all directions of the mountain. They increasingly approached the summit when suddenly, an ice-cold stream of energy struck like the wind. It strongly reeked of blood, causing them to tremble with fear. Xiang Luan and Hai Yang subconsciously gripped Ye Yin Zhu's hand even tighter. In Ye Yin Zhu's heart, the uneasiness became even clearer.

Very quickly they reached the mountain's peak. Sura was already there, his body hidden behind a large tree as he looked down the other side of the mountain. At this moment, his gaze was brimming with terror. Following Sura's gaze, Ye Yin Zhu saw an unforgettable scene that would stay with him for the rest of his life.

A hundred tall creatures rapidly approached the mountain, their heights exceeding two and a half meters. Their entire bodies were covered with ash-gray hair. They had four extremely thick and solid limbs and faces nearly identical to humans—only more fierce-looking and malicious. The majority of their bodies were drenched in blood. As they rapidly moved towards the mountain, they excitedly slaughtered wild animals. Their killing method was incomparable to Sura's in terms of bloodiness. They were unexpectedly using their thick arms to tear the beasts into two. This was also why the odor of blood was so rich.

Sura whispered, “They are of the beastmen species, Apemen.”

Chapter 30 – Massacring Sonic Blade (I)

The climbing speed of the gigantic Apemen as they went up the mountain could only be described as terrifying. They only needed a few jumps to immediately arrive by a beast’s side. Despite their similarities to the majority of beasts, they would still snatch the beasts from the floor and grab both ends of the beast with their extremely thick arms. An ear-piercing shriek later, the beast would be torn into two. Those Apemen even grabbed at the beasts’ internal organs and stuffed them into their mouths, chewing on them loudly.

“Apemen?” Ye Yin Zhu, surprised, looked at Sura. At this time, Xiang Luan and Hai Yan’s complexions were very unsightly as they stood next to Ye Yin Zhu. Xiang Luan abruptly turned around, supporting herself against a tree as she vomited. This was the first time she saw such a horrifying scene.

Although Sura’s complexion also didn’t look too well, he still steadily said, “Apemen are the generals of a third of the beastmen fighting forces. With their extraordinary strength, they can easily tear even a tiger in half. The hair on their bodies are extremely tough; an ordinary sword would have a difficult time injuring them. Even if our human Heavy Cavalry comes across them, they would have trouble withstanding the Apemen. What are the beastmen up to, sending out these expert climbers? Don’t tell me they want to mount a sneak attack on Konya City?”

Ye Yin Zhu frowned and said, “Wrong! Although these Apemen appear to be very powerful, the difference between them and our Dragon Cavalry is still great. They number only a hundred...” As he said this, his eyes suddenly dilated. Just as he saw those hundred Apemen at the top of a nearby mountain peak, he also saw countless ash-gray figures appear, dotting the base of the mountain and continuously forging upward.

Sura bellowed, “Quickly! This is only a scouting party! We need to return and notify everyone.”

A shadow suddenly appeared across the sky. Sura raised his head to look, only to see a Apemen’s thick arm grab a tree trunk, ripping it out as it charged in their direction. Its target was the vomiting Xiang Luan.

“Watch out!” Sura shouted lowly, but Ye Yin Zhu had already moved.

Stretching out with his left hand, Ye Yin Zhu pulled Xiang Luan into his chest as a semi-circular arc flashed out like lightning from his right hand. Pure yellow dou qi clashed with the Apeman’s thick body. With a loud bang, the Apeman was immediately jolted and sent flying away.

At this time, a generous amount of Apemen had already used their astonishing speed to climb up. Ye Yin Zhu discovered that the four of them were already surrounded.

“Let’s take advantage of the fact that their main forces aren’t here yet and kill them all.” Sura’s body rose without any hesitation, the dagger in his hand already exchanged for Angel’s Sigh. His slender silhouette flashed in the air, and in the blink of an eye, he overtook the Apemen Ye Yin Zhu had sent flying with an explosion of speed. The black light of Angel’s Sigh flashed and immediately created a bloody streak that followed its trail.

Ye Yin Zhu’s reaction was very quick. Perhaps it was because the crisis had thoroughly aroused his potential, but as he lifted Hai Yang onto his back with his right arm, his left arm embraced Xiang Luan, allowing her to cling to his body. His legs pushed against the ground, and he followed Sura by dashing ahead.

Angel’s Sigh was indeed worthy of being a divine device titled the Uncrowned King within assassin circles. With Sura’s lightning-quick speed, its innate qualities were vividly and thoroughly on display. Each flash of black light would be accompanied by a storm of blood, as the Cursed Blade severed each and every Apeman’s throat. Sura’s entire body resembled a dagger as he pierced through the enemy faction.

If an assassin didn’t need to defend themselves, then their attacks were even more terrifying than a Dragon Cavalryman. The current Sura was exactly like this. During this crisis, and with the Eternal Substitute Puppet activated, his illusory figure had essentially no need to evade any of the Apemen attacks since all of them phased through his body. They were utterly incapable of bringing the slightest bit of harm to him. In addition, his Angel’s Sigh harvested their lives at a rapid pace.

Little Yin Bi wasn’t afraid of the scene before it. From beginning to end, it

stood atop Sura's shoulder. Because it was flapping its wings to lighten its weight, Yin Bi didn't impede Sura at all. The dragon opened its mouth, and fireballs, water arrows, icicles, wind blades, light bullets—every kind of rudimentary elemental magic unceasingly spouted out of its mouth. Although the majority of the magic was Orange or Red Rank, it still helped in impeding the Apemen. Yin Bi assisted Sura and, in a split second, Sura swept away everything before him into the claws of death.

Only, the Apemen's fighting strength was clearly incomparable with beasts. A group of three Apemen strove forward to kill Sura, as they threw themselves at Sura knowing where they should defend. They immediately used their thick arms to protect their neck, a vital spot. Although Angel's Sigh could still leave deep, unhealable wounds on their bodies, now it couldn't rapidly reap death like it did before.

Compared to Sura, Ye Yin Zhu was under even greater pressure. Sura only needed to directly attack. Ye Yin Zhu was currently being attacked from three sides; this kind of close range Apemen attack made it impossible for him to play the zither. At this moment, he also needed to protect Xiang Luan and Hai Yang, so he could only fight with his right hand.

The Divine Celestial Protection activated, and milky white rays of light completely enveloped all three of their bodies. Although the Apemen were extraordinarily strong, breaking through this defense wouldn't be easy for them. Meanwhile, the Jade Silk manifested with a dark green radiance. Although it was only a thin thread, the whip had a frightening attack power after Ye Yin Zhu poured his dou qi into it.

Seven to eight gigantic Apemen were throwing themselves at Ye Yin Zhu. His right hand shook, and the Jade Silk swept out, striking across the two Apemen on the left.

Peng. Peng. These two muffled sounds echoed out and the two Apemen were immediately sent flying. Because he was carrying two people, his flexibility was greatly diminished. As he repelled two of the Apemen, the Divine Celestial Protection also received three attacks, causing it to violently shudder and nearly force Ye Yin Zhu to lose control of his spiritual force and thus, his defense. His body fell back as he quickly swept the Jade Silk out and forced the other few

Apemen to retreat.

Sura shouted loudly, “Yin Zhu, strike to kill! You are carrying those two girls; the rate at which you are knocking them off the mountain cannot compete with the mountain climbing speed of these expert Apemen. If you don’t kill them, we won’t be able to survive.” He knew about Ye Yin Zhu’s benevolent heart. Unless he was provoked, he was afraid Yin Zhu would truly never kill.

Ye Yin Zhu sighed darkly within his heart. Even though his heart was clear and pure, it didn’t mean it was weak and kind hearted. Ye Li and Qin Shang had taught him to inflict the most severe of injuries possible to the opponent in a confrontation. Being lenient would only bring harm to himself. At this moment, Sura’s reminder ignited the killing intent within Ye Yin Zhu’s heart. To say the least, he knew there was absolutely no way he could allow Hai Yang and Xiang Luan to come to harm.

“Rise!” Ye Yin Zhu shouted loudly. His entire body trembled, causing delicate voices to cry out in alarm. Xiang Luan and Hai Yang’s bodies were sent flying, like Buddha separating himself from the world’s gravity. Their bodies unexpectedly flew up 10 meters into the air.

“Bamboo Attack.” Yellow Bamboo Dou Qi and Jade Silk perfectly integrated to form a hybrid yellow-green beam of light similar to a forest of sharp blades. In a flash, it pierced out in all directions. The Jade Silk’s inherent, extreme tenaciousness in addition to the Yellow Rank Level 5 Dou Qi was not inferior in any respect to a sharp blade.

Explosions rumbled out. The previous encirclement of eight Apemen were all explosively sent flying, smashing into many of their comrades. They were no longer able to get up as each Apeman had a tiny hole that dripped blood from between their eyebrows. Although that small hole was difficult for the naked eye to distinguish, these eight gigantic apes’ brains had already been shaken into paste by the powerful Bamboo Dou Qi.

A single strike got rid of eight Apemen, and Ye Yin Zhu didn’t pause in his movements. Still currently in the air, Hai Yang and Xiang Luan’s figures had already ascended to the pinnacle of their flight and had begun to fall back down.

Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes flashed with a violet energy. Looking up at the sky and

bellowing, his body suddenly dashed forward and arrived beside Sura. Two fists simultaneously welcomed the two gigantic Apemen's massive punches. Dou qi accumulated within his fists. At this very moment, he felt his whole body brimming with an inexhaustible strength. Following the emergence of this aggressiveness, he became a changed person.

Chapter 30 – Massacring Sonic Blade (II)

Two violent explosions roared out and caused a tooth-aching, bone-disintegrating sound to ring out, like kernels popping explosively. The disproportional collision resulted in a completely opposite outcome. The two gigantic Apemen's punches collided with Ye Yin Zhu's fists right when the explosions began.

Unable to resist the explosion of power, all the bones in their bodies shattered into pieces. Resembling two round lumps of meat, they were sent flying away. Blood violently sprayed out. In a moment, neither ape was alive.

Ye Yin Zhu's head didn't turn around as he suddenly kicked backwards, immediately causing another terrifying, bone-shattering sound. A gigantic Apeman that had attempted to ambush him was sent flying five meters away by that kick. His sudden, explosive assault cleared the entire area.

Sura stabbed his dagger into the chests of two gigantic Apemen in succession with great difficulty before retreating to Ye Yin Zhu's side. He was surprised to see that Ye Yin Zhu's dark eyes had become a rich violet without him knowing. The pale skin exposed by the magic robe even had a faint shimmer of violet.

With one in each arm, Ye Yin Zhu caught the falling Xiang Luan and Hai Yang from the air, placing them behind his body to protect them.

The Apemen were extremely fierce. After a few frantic moments, 80 Apemen slowly surrounded them in all directions. The harsh mountain wind seemingly made the atmosphere become even more gloomy and chilly, matching the thick stench of blood in the air. It caused Xiang Luan and Hai Yang to faintly tremble, both with deathly pale complexions. They had grown up in seclusion since they

were children; when could they have seen such a cruel scene? At this moment, they had already completely forgotten that they were mages.

“Sura, you protect them,” Ye Yin Zhu called back, his figure already dashing forward.

After that, Sura, Xiang Luan, and Hai Yang witnessed a terrible scene. Without any zither notes, without even using Jade Silk, Ye Yin Zhu attacked with only his two fists.

It was a completely physical battle. At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu’s tranquil grace had already disappeared, and his whole body flooded with an austere iciness from top to bottom. He was naturally and unconditionally tyrannical. His white robe fluttered in the breeze, his black hair calmly framing his face. Every moment, he sent an Apemen flying explosively like an artillery shell, the sounds of its bones shattering seemingly as though they were sighs from a Death God. This was absolute power.

He didn’t stay very far from Sura and the others, only attacking the Apemen that approached the group of three. Occasionally, an Apemen would slip past his guard, but it was impossible for them to escape the Angel’s Sigh in Sura’s hand.

The Apemen weren’t stupid. Within the many species of beastmen, their intelligence was comparatively high. After 30 Apemen died by Ye Yin Zhu’s hand, they were already a bit afraid. They no longer attacked directly, encircling the group of four and issuing threatening roars instead.

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t take initiative to attack. An ice-cold smile graced the corners of his mouth. He returned to Sura and the two girls, sitting in front of them. Rays of light sparked across his hand, and the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance quietly materialized above his knees. He was not a warrior—he was a mage. Even if his dou qi’s power exceeded his magic, he was still a mage.

Zither notes rose, but these notes weren’t gentle, soft, or pleasant to listen to. These notes brimmed with the metallic clangs of a very powerful army. His eight fingers danced across the strings like fairies. The zither notes weren’t part of a song, yet dazzling yellow sound blades still shot out with peerless speed.

It could be said that Ye Yin Zhu’s cultivation was a harmony between magic and martial arts. The best embodiment of harmonious magic and martial arts

was his sound blades. His Bamboo Dou Qi had reached Yellow Rank Level 5 at last, causing his sound blade's strength to suddenly skyrocket.

Wherever the yellow sound blades went, trees that were in their way would be turned into splinters, and anyone blocking them would lose their life. The atmosphere was accompanied by ear-piercing zither notes that tore the air asunder, leaving traces of rippling sound waves.

The most magical aspect of the sound blades was its lack of dependence on the direction of the zither plucking; the sound blades depended on Ye Yin Zhu's control of his spiritual force for direction. He had studied the Spiritual Magic journal Ferguson had given him these past few days, not wasting a moment of his time. His understanding of Spiritual Magic had reached new heights. This was especially true for his control over his zither notes by means of his Spiritual Magic. His newfound control not only improved his current music skills, but also improved his control over his sound blades.

A single sound blade would only leave a line of blood on the Apemen's bodies, unable to kill them. Yet, if three sound blades bombarded the same spot, then the Apemen's defenses would be unable to resist. After all, this was equivalent to a tyrannical attack of Cyan Rank dou qi and Green Rank magic! The majority of Apemen had no opportunity to dodge as lines of blood appeared on their bodies. Their lives had already been taken away.

The scene occurring before Sura, Xiang Luan, and Hai Yang's eyes was absolutely terrifying. They could clearly see a dense mist of blood spray out in the wake of the sound blades slicing through the Apemen. The most frightening thing was when some of the Apemen's lower extremities still walked forward while their upper bodies were left behind. The injuries on their bodies were as smooth and precise as a chisel and as powerful and oppressive as an axe!

A Divine Music mage's terrifying killing power appeared for the first time on the battlefield, with Sura and the two others fortunately the first to witness it. Because of the massacre previously, Hai Yang and Xiang Luan had adapted somewhat, but they were just like Sura at this moment, their complexion deathly pale and frightened. How could they have anticipated that the gentle, innocent Ye Yin Zhu would become so unexpectedly terrifying when he attacked others?

The metallic clanging of a powerful army faded away, and with it were the lives of countless Apemen. Using the party of four as the center, the surroundings around them reeked richly of blood. There were intact Apemen corpses with their entire skeletons shattered to pieces by Ye Yin Zhu. Then there were those mowed down by the sound blades released by the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance. Those mowed down truly had extremely bad luck. Each of their bodies were at least split in half, and some were even chopped into seven or eight lumps of meat by the sound blades. The ice-cold earth was dyed red with the hot blood of Apemen, the entire group having transformed into a field of corpses.

Sura had always believed his killing speed was exceptionally quick, yet only a tenth of the carcasses before his eyes were done by his hand.

Ye Yin Zhu sat there, motionless, an ice-cold expression still gracing his face as the layer of violet light gradually disappeared.

Sura calmed himself down with difficulty. Biting his lower lip, he said, "Yin Zhu, we should leave quickly."

"Wa~~" The previously ruthless Ye Yin Zhu suddenly bent his waist, vomiting as he clutched the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance to his chest. His sudden change caught Sura and the two girls off guard. After a brief moment of astonishment, Xiang Luan and Hai Yang couldn't help but smile. Xiang Luan unhappily cried, "You scared me to death just now! So it turns out this guy isn't that callous after all! He is still the shota of our Divine Music division."

Sura also couldn't help exposing a trace of a smile. The iciness and terror of their surroundings seemed to have dispersed quite a bit.

Ye Yin Zhu completely vomited the remnants of his breakfast. Gasping for air, he looked all around him, his face flushing red before draining of color. "This, this was really all my doing?" He spoke in a daze.

Just a moment ago, when he had begun killing in full swing, a warmth had surged forth from within his body, seeming to release a power that acclimatized his body to violence. Accepting the circumstances then, he had begun his massacre. While he was attacking, he only felt that his whole body was being stimulated. Only one word remained in his mind: destroy. Upon recalling this, he unexpectedly felt as if he had been unable to control his body at that time. It

seemed that the contract he had signed with Zi didn't only give him an increase in strength and power; it also gave him a few other things.

Chapter 30 – Massacring Sonic Blade (III)

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Sura walked up to Ye Yin Zhu. Lightly patting his shoulder, he asked with deep concern, “Are you alright?”

Ye Yin Zhu forced a smile and nodded, saying, “We need to leave quickly. As it turns out, this massacre is a rather painful affair.”

Sura sighed lightly. “In order to protect yourself, sometimes killing people is unavoidable. You will become used to this after many instances. Oh! Look!” She suddenly pointed towards the base of the mountain.

Their pupils all dilated at the same time. They saw, at the base of the mountain, that there were beastmen marching as far as the eye could see, with the leading beastmen already halfway up the mountain. With such vast numbers, even with an indefinite amount of time, they would not be able to count them all. Following the beastmen were a few creatures approaching three meters in height. These beastmen’s bodies were covered in yellow and black stripes. They appeared to be even stronger than the Apemen. Behind them were tawny furred, black-spotted beastmen, who, despite their slighter stature, still approached two meters in height and possessed a surprisingly quick speed that allowed them to overtake the furthest Apeman—practically flying up the mountainside. They had clearly heard the sounds of fighting atop the mountain.

“Tigermen and Leopardmen—the entirety of the beastmen’s main force. With the addition of the Apemen, it’s a powerful military force full of expert climbers. Heavens! What are the beastmen up to?” Sura took a breath of cold air, only to feel a chill shudder throughout his whole body.

Xiang Luan suddenly cried out, “Behemoths! Those are Behemoths!”

At the rear of the beastmen ranks were Behemoths, their gigantic bodies reaching fifteen meters in height. The sun shone down on their iron-gray hair, and rays of light reflected off its metallic sheen. Their bodies were extremely tall,

allowing them to be clearly seen even from afar. To say the least, a visual estimate would unexpectedly conclude the presence of a minimum of a hundred Behemoths. Along with the Tigermen, Apemen, and Leopardmen, these were the main powers of their military. This accumulated power was equivalent to a third of Mjolnir Stronghold's forces.

"Quickly go!" Ye Yin Zhu could no longer allow himself to feel awkward. Both of his hands grabbed Xiang Luan and Hai Yang. Calling out to Sura, he rapidly soared off in the direction of Konya City. That army had several tens of thousands of beastmen! Not mentioning his one person, even if there was a hundred of him, he still wouldn't dare to confront those gigantic beastmen Behemoths—the main forces of the army.

Sura's speed was extremely quick. A moment later and he had already passed Ye Yin Zhu. Ye Yin Zhu bellowed, "Sura! You're fast; go back to Konya City and warn them! Those beastmen are definitely attacking Konya City. Who would've thought that they actually did not hesitate to traverse over that natural defense. It seems that our army is still too careless. This Beastmen War might not be as simple as merely plundering food. Konya City is surrounded by mountains, so there is only one path that leads to Milan Empire. If the beastmen rush through, after exiting Konya City and going through Brenner Pass, they could then march right to the wide expanse of Puglia Plains, unstoppable. I'm afraid the Milan Empire will suffer disastrously."

Listening to Oliveira's lectures on battle strategies these past days, his familiarity with the battlefield map allowed him to roughly predict the objectives of the Beastmen Army. Puglia Plains could be considered as the most important food source of the Milan Empire. The fertile land had led to the development of many major commercial cities. Due to this region being inland, the city's defenses were extremely poor. Not considering the inclusion of Behemoths in the Beastman Army, even an ordinary army would easily perish before the Beastman Army. Those cities could be described as the economic lifeline of Milan Empire.

Sura hesitated. "If I go first, what about you?"

Ye Yin Zhu urgently pressed, "Now's not the time. Go, hurry up and go! Only with early preparation can we get a better chance at stopping them. Tell Elder

Brother Oliveira and make him immediately ask for help from Sacred Heart City. If not, it'll be too late. The beastmen still haven't arrived, so there's still time. Quick, go!"

Sura knew that Ye Yin Zhu's words weren't wrong. Clenching his teeth, his body suddenly picked up speed. With the effects of the Eternal Substitute Puppet, his speed surpassed his natural limits. He flew past Ye Yin Zhu and sped towards Konya City.



Mjolnir Stronghold.

Chief Guti of the Thor Tribe was a formidable Lionman. As the King of the Thor Tribe, he was their most powerful warrior, his power comparable to a common Behemoth. His height surpassed three meters, and his whole body emitted a threatening air. He had two lion eyes, which, apart from having a powerful sight, shone with radiance and a bit of savage cruelty. Clearly, he didn't possess the simple brain of a common beastmen.

His large, strong hand unhurriedly beat the table in front of him. Looking at the sandbox on top of the table, his eyes flashed with a proud light.

"Our men should already be crossing Brenner Pass. As long as they clear Brenner Pass, the Milan Empire's tremendous wealth will inevitably belong to our Thor Tribe. When the moment comes, the Bearmen over at Solomon and the Tigermen at Mars Stronghold will no longer be able to contend against our Thor Tribe's strength. The Northern Wasteland will be unified under my hand at last. Good, this is truly fantastic. Sir Emerson, you have truly granted our Thor Tribe the greatest riches. Fortunately, we had your advice; otherwise, it would have never occurred to me to break through the pass to directly strike the people within Milan."

Standing to the left of Guti was a blue-cloaked human. The cloak was very large, covering up his whole body and preventing his face from showing. Lowering his head, he humbly spoke in a low and hoarse voice. "Praise Thor. This is Thor's grace for his people. At the moment, we need to greatly pressure Milan. Even if they discover our men penetrating deeply into Milan later, they would not dare to transfer more Dragon Cavalry forces there as support. Only like this

will we be able to plunder even greater riches. I believe your army will be able to fill the ten space rings I have bequeathed you.”

Guti laughed loudly. “Correct, what you said is correct. Those ten space rings can even hold a city. I believe that very soon, my people will see how immense the riches of Milan are.” Saying this, a cold light flashed across his eyes. “Only, I am quite worried of how Blue Dias will respond. Sir Emerson, you said that if we succeed in attacking the inner regions of Milan, it will destroy the equilibrium of the north. Would this not provoke Blue Dias? We cannot contend against their strength. My ancestors left behind memoirs telling us from beginning to end of the impossibility of contending against Blue Dias.”

Emerson smiled slightly and said, “No, of course not. Blue Dias Seven Pagoda is unlikely to easily intervene in the affairs of the continent. Milan Empire is the most powerful empire. Although you may be able to obtain a lot of wealth this time, but it’s unlikely you will go as far as to destabilize the Milan Empire’s foundations. Even if their nation’s power is weakened a bit, perhaps that is what Blue Dias wants to see happen. Blue Dias’ position will become even more stable with the task of balancing the north and south.”

Guti bellowed lowly, “What does Blue Dias still need to balance?! I’m afraid that even if all the armies on the continent were to stand up together, it would still be impossible for them to confront Blue Dias. Assemble the men. Pass on my commands: All of the Wolf Cavalry Army is to set off. Mjolnir Stronghold will serve as the heart and allow me to ruthlessly attack the Milan defense perimeter. The Lionmen Guard Regiment, Behemoth Army, Minotaur Army, and Centaur Archery Legion will follow my frontline attack, striking Sacred Heart City. Maldini, I want to make it so that you are unable to manage two fronts. By the time the Milan Empire dispatches more troops, my plundering corps might have already returned in triumph. Haha... hahahaha...”



Atop the mountain peak was a large pile of snapped tree trunks. Ye Yin Zhu unceasingly bustled around. After Sura left, he himself did not urgently return to Konya City. Yin Zhu first climbed to the highest peak, stopping there for the time being.

Chapter 30 – Massacring Sonic Blade (IV)

He thoroughly understood that the situation of Konya City wasn't very optimistic. The Beastmen Army's assault, not mentioning the several tens of thousands of troops, also had those Behemoths. Konya City didn't have a high chance of stopping them, but regardless of all of this, it would be more favourable to Konya City's defense if the invading army was delayed as much as possible. As a result, Ye Yin Zhu was now atop the mountain peak, preparing to hold them off for a little while more.

Xiang Luan and Hai Yang stood relatively far away. Ye Yin Zhu originally wanted them to leave first, but Xiang Luan said that without the assistance of Ye Yin Zhu's dou qi, they wouldn't be able to walk very far even if they left first. It would be better to wait for him and leave together rather than to collapse from exhaustion.

Ye Yin Zhu wanted to do something very simple. This mountain peak was the furthest from Konya City. The mountain peaks closer to Konya City were relatively level, but the beastmen were attempting to climb up the more precipitous peaks. Many towering trees decorated this sloping mountain side. With this peak's kilometer-high altitude, a tree falling on a person would have a very astonishing destructive power.

Although he was only one person, Ye Yin Zhu revealed an astonishing speed and near berserk power. Hai Yang and Xiang Luan were already staring at him in rapture.

The ten meter-long Jade Silk swung about. With Bamboo Dou Qi poured into it, regardless of how thick the trees were, the Jade Silk would wrap around it. When Ye Yin Zhu tugged, the giant tree would snap in half immediately with a smooth cut, as if a sharp blade had sliced through it in an instant. Afterwards, Ye Yin Zhu would rely on his immense strength to pile up the felled giant trees atop the summit. In merely a few moments, the peak already had a tightly packed pile atop it.

“How is he human? Does he not know the meaning of exhaustion?” Xiang Luan

muttered. She and Hai Yang were mages; more specifically, they were useless Divine Music mages. At this moment, they were unable to help with the frenzied preparations and were only able to look on.

Hai Yang sucked in a deep breath of cold air. “Yin Zhu’s power might even be more than an ordinary beastman. Look, apart from cutting down the trees, he hadn’t used any dou qi.”

Xiang Luang smiled happily. Moving closer to Hai Yang’s side, she whispered, “Yes! He’s very strong.”

Hai Yang’s charming face reddened. Glaring at Xiang Luan, she said, “At this kind of time, you’re still thinking of such illicit things?”

Xiang Luan assumed an air of someone being wronged. “I am only commenting on his strength. When have I been thinking of illicit things? ... From what I see, it’s your thoughts that are not very pure towards him! Hai Yang, I didn’t expect even you to have your heart moved by him.”

Hai Yang lightly smacked her, saying, “Stop playing around. Right now, you should think harder on how to solve the crisis in front of us. I didn’t expect the beastmen to unexpectedly stake everything on one campaign and launch an attack on the most impenetrable region. If they breach Konya City, then I fear...”

Xiang Luan’s brows were furrowed in worry. Sighing, she said, “I hope that we can delay them here for a long time. How else can my Imperial Father know to dispatch troops promptly? The beastmen this time appear to have a complex plan for plundering food. If they attack with all their strength, then I’m afraid the defenders of Sacred Heart City cannot help us.”

Hai Yang’s face changed colors. “If it’s like that, then we might be done for. It takes at least twenty days to reach the north from Milan City. Even if it’s purely cavalry, it is also impossible for them to rush here in ten days. But now, don’t even mention ten days... I fear we won’t be able to even defend against them for ten hours!”

Xiang Luan sighed, remarking, “We can only submit to the will of Heaven. Fortunately, even if the sky falls, we still have these men to cling to.” Saying this, she pointed to the bustling Ye Yin Zhu.

His figure flashed, and Ye Yin Zhu returned to the two girls' side. At this moment, the giant, thick trees that had heavily forested the mountain peak were stacked up like piles of branches, forming a thick layer of protection. Only, Ye Yin Zhu didn't have a trace of happiness in him.

"Yin Zhu, how's things below? Have the beastmen come?" Xiang Luan asked.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, "Not yet. They seem to be centralizing their troops in the valley, probably because we have killed those Apemen earlier. The beastmen seem to be cautious."

Xiang Luan asked, "When will we leave then?"

Ye Yin Zhu said, "When the beastmen come up the mountain. I want these giant trees to deal them some losses. Our sloping side is lush with trees. The side they are climbing have steep trees but in significantly less amounts. This may slow them down, but I'm afraid these rolling trees won't be very effective. If only we had decent fire. It's almost winter, so the trees are dry, meaning it would be very appropriate to attack with fire now. Yesterday, I even heard Elder Brother Oliveira specifically mention examples of fire attacks used in war. It's a pity we're not Fire mages."

"Who said we didn't have fire?" A voice suddenly spoke out, attracting the three's gazes. Turning around to look, it was actually Sura, who had returned.

Sura's complexion was somewhat pale, and his chest was moving up and down furiously. Gasping heavily for air, his face had a hard time masking his exhaustion. The small Silver Dragon Yin Bi was comfortably perched on her shoulder, its rather fat body still adorable. From time to time, it would use its front claws to scratch Sura's head.

"Sura, why did you return?" Ye Yin Zhu asked in surprise.

Sura walked up to Ye Yin Zhu before plopping his butt on the ground. "I already told the news to Oliveira. I was afraid you met danger, so I returned to find all of you. Who would have imagined I would find you atop the mountain? Yin Zhu, are you planning to use rolling logs to deal with the beastmen?"

Ye Yin Zhu nodded, saying, "There's a steep incline over there. It's easily guarded but hard to attack. I only wanted to delay the beastmen's advancement

as much as possible. I also want to give Elder Brother Oliveira more time to prepare. What did he say when he heard about the situation?”

Sura bitterly laughed and said, “What can he say? Although we have five hundred Dragon Cavalrymen, we only have a fighting strength of six hundred people with the inclusion of the students. The original five hundred defenders of Konya City can practically be disregarded. At this moment, he already used magical communications to notify Sacred Heart City. I don’t know how Sacred Heart City responded. Upon passing him the news, I immediately returned.”

“Thank you, Sura.” Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes expressed a poignant radiance.

Sura quirked his lips downwards, saying, “For what? Have you forgotten that I said I would follow you?”

The two of them looked at each other and couldn’t refrain from revealing knowing smiles. Just at that moment, Ye Yin Zhu suddenly realized the beastmen had already begun climbing the mountain and hurriedly called out to the others.

The four of them came to the mountain side holding the tree trunks and looked down, only to see a vast amount of beastmen just starting to climb the mountain after exiting the valley. In the valley, the already assembled beastmen troops had begun advancing towards their mountain peak. This was the final protective barrier before Konya City.

Currently, the ones rushing in the forefront were no longer Apemen; they were the slighter built but significantly faster Leopardmen. Their numbers were innumerable. The Leopardmen used their extremely astonishing speed to climb up the mountain. Following the Leopardmen were the Tigermen and Apemen. Those striking Behemoths hadn’t moved; they seemed to be ordering the other beastmen to climb the mountain.

Sura glanced at Ye Yin Zhu. “What should we do now?”

Ye Yin Zhu countered, “You just said you had fire a moment ago. Were you referring to Yin Bi?”

Sura nodded. “Although Yin Bi is young, it can at least cast Red Rank Fire Magic. Even though it’s not enough to attack the enemy, setting things on fire is not a problem. These trees are also very dry.”

Ye Yin Zhu promptly made a decision. “Good! We will just use a fire attack. Regardless of the success, after sending these logs rolling down the slope, we will immediately returning to Konya City.”

Sura had Yin Bi jump down from her shoulder, patting its head. “It’s up to you now, isn’t it?”

Chapter 31 – Gold Behemoth (I)

A/N Summary: VIP Paywall coming soon... (rip, time to break out the \$\$ to buy access to them) Soon, these 10,000 character chapters will be divided into approximately three 3,000 character chapter parts. We will soon enter the great climax of book 1! Hehe, the future contents are truly brilliant. ... Support the author (as per usual)... Chapters from now on will be from 9,000-10,000 characters in full.

Yin Bi lifted its head. With a haughty appearance, it climbed shakily up the mass of trees, faint magical elements beginning to undulate around its body. The round silver scales on its body started to emit dim rays of light. Even if it was just a baby, as a dragon of all magical elements, Fire Magic was one amongst its skill set.

When Ye Yin Zhu noticed that the leopard men were almost halfway up the mountain, he nodded towards Sura and said, “Let’s get Yin Bi ready. We’ll start when they climb up a little higher.”

The Yin Zhu from before knew absolutely nothing about military affairs. He had only cultivated his Pure Zither Heart and, as a result, missed the opportunity to study many other subjects. But after entering the mainland and beginning his studies at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, he was like a giant sponge—constantly absorbing everything he could learn from his surroundings. Even though Ye Yin Zhu faced an army consisting of tens of thousands of beastmen with only a team of four, he could still remain calm. This was something the three people next to him couldn’t help but secretly admire, and it was exactly Ye Yin Zhu’s calm composure that allowed the others to maintain a relatively steady state of mind.

The air grew heavy. At this very moment, each passing minute felt like an eternity for the four of them. Hai Yang and Xiang Luan’s palms had long since been covered with sweat. Sura glanced down the mountain for a moment before shooting a glance towards the calm and composed Ye Yin Zhu. His heartbeat quickened, pulsing erratically.

In fact, Ye Yin Zhu was also extremely nervous. It was just that he could control

his emotions better. During his cultivation of the zither since infancy, Qin Shang would use all kinds of methods to disturb his playing, acclimatizing him to playing constantly regardless of disturbances. This also had a hand in giving Ye Yin Zhu his current sincerity and perseverance.

A minute passed. Ten minutes passed.

The Leopardmen forces had already traveled to just under 300 meters from the top, and now the majority of the Beastmen Army began climbing up the mountain. Even those Behemoths at the very back began to move.

“Fire!” Ye Yin Zhu bellowed.

Sura immediately passed on the order to Yin Bi. An orange halo of light quietly discharged from Yin Bi’s body. It was unexpectedly the Orange Rank magic—Flames of Renouncement. The chilly air suddenly became scorching hot as the trees Ye Yin Zhu had piled together combusted.

Little Yin Bi flapped its wings and jumped down, immediately rushing toward the other tree piles. At this time, Ye Yin Zhu also began to move at lightning speed.

Pushing himself to his limits, the recently combusted tree logs were immediately sent flying downwards, waves of whistling wind following in their wake. The wind borrowed the power of the flames, immediately setting alight the giant trees present on the slope. The dry weather ensured the greatest advantages for this fiery attack. The steep mountain side full of trees had indeed resembled Ye Yin Zhu’s thoughts, already becoming an immense hindrance to the plan. When the rolling trees fell and smashed into these trees, they immediately caused the fire to scatter in all directions. Although the speed of descent slowed down a bit, it exponentially increased the death zone imperceptibly.

The sudden misfortune caught the climbing Leopardmen unprepared. Blood-curdling screeches sounded through the air in an instant. The 10 foremost Leopardmen had already crashed into a rolling trees, but behind them was the enormous army! Like dominoes falling one after another, the flaming trees rolled down the mountain side, producing a frightening result.

The Tigermen roared in anger. The Leopardmen emitted blood-curdling

screeches. The Apemen howled piercing, undulating cries. For a moment, the entire slope became a harsh cacophony of misery. The individually strong beastmen basically had no particular military formation. Facing this sudden attack, they naturally had no way to react. Confronting an unknown enemy and the ruthless blaze, the plundering legion was immediately thrown into chaos.

Ye Yin Zhu naturally didn't watch this scene. At this moment, he coordinated with Yin Bi's razor-sharp movements. Yin Bi would ignite the piles of tree logs, and he would immediately push them down the mountain side. Relying on the Divine Celestial Protection Robe, he didn't need to fear the flames of the rolling trees.

After 10 more piles of trees were sent flying down in flames, Little Yin Bi's magic was already exhausted. Tired, it returned to Sura's chest, withdrawing into the special spatial domain within the reverse scales to rest. Currently, the effect of the rolling trees was already maximized in its entirety.

Ye Yin Zhu, when picking the trees to roll down the mountain, had chosen the thickest trees he could carry. Who knew how far Brenner Pass dated back to, but with its close proximity to the Northern Wasteland, the pass had been deserted, allowing the trees to grow exceedingly tall. If not for Ye Yin Zhu's astonishing power, it would have been impossible for him to assemble so many gigantic trees in such a short period of time.

The giant trees rolled down the mountain, aflame and turning the beastmen encroachment into chaos. At this moment, the entire mountain side had already become an inferno of hell. Not only were the trees that Ye Yin Zhu pushed down in flames, but the other trees and the withered vegetation had also begun to burn. A surge of thick smoke unceasingly ascended. Everything was set aflame. The hair on the beastmen's bodies were extremely flammable—no longer did it reflect their offensive potential, but instead it became the greatest burden to them.

These mentally retarded beastmen already couldn't continue their climb to the mountain peak. Amidst the flames and rolling logs, panic spread widely and scattered in all directions in an instant. After all, the beastmen weren't actual humans. Their hearts were ruled by the most primitive and brutal emotions, so even their superior commander was unable to completely control them.

Dis and Perkins were now very depressed. As the commanders of this beastmen hidden operation, they originally thought it would be smooth sailing with a nigh impossible chance of running into any obstacles, but the situation before their eyes was already out of their control.

“Bastard, there is no such thing as retreat. Give me a rush. No enemy can stop our beastmen from advancing.” Dis grabbed an Apeman scrabbling down the side of the mountain. Exerting his thick arms, which were larger than both Apemen and humans, the Gold Behemoth Dis looked like he was holding a toy figurine. Crushing the toy to pieces, a rain of blood showered down onto the earth.

The blood provoked the Behemoths behind Dis’ back, causing them all to release a vicious aura. In a moment, those beastmen who had dared to run away perished instantly.

“Eldest Brother, this isn’t the way. It would be more efficient to let them tear it down first.” Perkins grabbed Dis’ shoulder, preventing him from joining the slaughter. Also a Gold Behemoth, his intelligence was a bit higher than Dis’.

Dis snarled, “Bastards, they’re all giving me a retreat. Behemoths! Listen to my orders. Follow me up the mountain. I will take a look to see who dares to stop us Behemoths from advancing forward.” After these words, he dashed forward. His gigantic body neared twenty meters, but it wasn’t the slightest bit clumsy. His two legs heavily stomped against the ground, leaving behind pairs of deep footprints. His body already leapt forward ten meters, throwing himself at the steep incline. Giant rolling trees poured down in torrents from the mountain peak, yet Dis didn’t even bother to evade at all. Roaring, he forcibly dashed forward.

Boom——

Dis’ body continued dashing forward, and those rolling trees shattered into splinters. The fire might have been a catastrophe to the other beastmen, but to a Behemoth, it had no effect whatsoever. The hairs on their bodies were basically inflammable.

The current Thor Beastmen King, Guti, had dispatched a plundering legion composed of the elites among the elites with Gold Behemoths Dis and Perkins

serving as Commander and Vice-Commander respectively. The legion included four Silver Behemoths, eighty Berserker Behemoths, two thousand Apemen, ten thousand Leopardmen, and ten thousand Tigermen. This was the might of the Beastmen Army.

Chapter 31 – Gold Behemoth (II)

The fire burned intensely on the mountain. The Apemen, Tigermen, and Leopardmen were frantically running away in all directions. Gold Behemoths Dis and Perkins began divvying up tasks whilst they flew uphill. At this moment, every Behemoth had eyes filled with endless rage. As long as they reached the mountain peak, even if there were Gigantic Dragons, they would tear their enemies to shreds.

At last, Dis was the first to step atop the mountain peak. As an arrogant rank 9 magical beast, he didn't fear the possibility of an enemy ambush. As he climbed the mountain, however, his heart was filled with such intense anger that it nearly exploded.

At that moment, to their surprise, the enemy they, the most unparalleled military force on the continent, actually confronted was thin air. Yes, that was right. Atop the mountain peak, apart from the chilly air, there was nothing. In the surroundings, only chopped-off tree stumps remained. It was absolutely empty; don't mention humans, there wasn't even a single ant.

“Bas——tard——!” Dis' two eyes reddened in fury as he snarled wrathfully. He suddenly bent over, pounding his fists against the ground explosively.

Perkins moved quickly. Upon seeing Dis' violent reaction, he immediately jumped away. The reaction time of the four Silver Behemoth also wasn't bad as they all leapt back down the mountain immediately. When compared to Dis' rage, the mountain fire was like floating clouds. The Berserk Behemoths weren't as lucky. Facing the might of a rank 9 Gold Behemoth, they wanted to ignore Dis' orders and run away, but they were unable to.

How gigantic were these twenty-meter tall Gold Behemoths? Their width

exceeded 1.5 meters so their fists were huge. With Dis smashed the ground with all his strength, his entire arm pierced the ground. Unexpectedly, his crazy punches didn't make a single sound. It was only less than a moment later that the mountain peak exploded with Dis' location at the epicenter.

Boom— —

Apart from the rare ores within Brenner Pass, the overwhelming majority of the mountain range was composed of extremely hard granite. At this very instant, this mountain peak unexpectedly dropped thirty meters in height due to the berserk pounding of a Gold Behemoth. Innumerable stone fragments shot out like artillery shells. Of the eighty Berserk Behemoths, not one was able to resist the tremendously powerful aftershock and tumbled down the mountain. Laughably, their gigantic bodies had a greater destructive force than the logs that had been rolled down the slope. At the very least, the rolling trees were incomparable to a Behemoth's substantial weight and durable body.

The dust gradually settled. Golden rays of light glittered in the center as a figure stood up. The frantic pounding had reduced the ire in Dis' heart slightly. The red light flickering in his eyes gradually vanished.

Perkins walked up the mountain, head and face filthy with grime. Alongside him were the four Silver Behemoths. He laughed loudly and commented, "Boss, you flipped out so violently. Look, that is Konya City." As he said this, he lifted a thick arm to point at the base of the mountain.

Dis' golden gaze followed the gesture, and cracking sounds echoed from the diamond-like bones in his body. Pipa. He coldly said, "So, this is the city that is prepared to bear my rage. Pass on my commands: Enter Konya City and kill. Leave no one alive."

Perkins helplessly shrugged, throwing a broad arm as thick as a city wall over Dis' shoulders. "Boss, who do you want me to pass this order to? Now we are even lacking an army." While he spoke, he jerked his thumb behind him.

"Eh..." Dis realized that apart from him and Perkins, there were only four Silver Behemoths under his command. Even the entire army of Berserk Behemoths had been sent rolling down the mountain.

"Damnit, the first army!" Dis roared.

The few Silver Behemoths hastily sorted out the plundering legion that had been baptized in the enemy's fire.

Perkins said, "Boss, looks like the situation isn't good! The Milanese seem to already know of our raid. Otherwise, it would've been impossible for them to prepare such a good ambushing fire attack against us. What should we do now?"

Dis snarled furiously, "So what if they're prepared? Don't tell me they can still block our advancement? I don't believe the Milanese have enough troops there to block us."

Perkins countered, "Guti has very high expectations for us, so it's best to be a bit more careful. Let's wait for our army to regroup first. From what I see, just a moment ago our army was turned upside down."

Dis disdainfully sneered, "Those inferior beastmen are indeed useless, being naturally afraid of fire. They can be counted as unlucky. We'll just listen to you. The Milanese in Konya City can live a while longer."



While Dis and Perkins were talking, Ye Yin Zhu's team of four had already returned to Konya City. The results of their fire attack was better than they'd anticipated. After seeing the majority of the beastmen struggle within the raging inferno, they didn't dare to linger around and immediately descended the mountain. This was why the Behemoths could only find an absolutely empty summit.

When they entered through the city's gate, Ye Yin Zhu had finally caught a glimpse of what a fully armed Dragon Cavalry Regiment looked like. Oliveira, wearing oceanic-blue heavy armor and holding a seven-meter-long dark-blue dragonspear, was commanding the Dragon Cavalrymen. Okafur was not present, so as the future Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander, Oliveira was duty-bound to lead.

"Yin Zhu, all of you have returned. What is with all that thick smoke in the distance?" Oliveira had proved himself as someone from the Violet Clan. Upon receiving the report from Sura, he had immediately begun issuing commands, giving Konya City time to react.

Ye Yin Zhu explained, “The mountain over there is relatively steep. We took advantage of the fact that the beastmen had not arrived yet to chop down some trees. We ignited them to implement the fire attack you mentioned before. The results were pretty good. The beastmen shouldn’t be attacking for a little while.”

Xiang Luan smiled and said, “Yes! The results were extraordinary. At least half the mountain is in flames. Since the weather has been arid, perhaps the damage to the beastmen wasn’t small.”

Oliveira’s eyes brightened. He clapped Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder. “Brother, you have guts. You deserve to be called our Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts’ Freshman Champion. Now, our highest priority is to gain some time. Try to be specific—what are the numbers of the beastmen army?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “There’s a countless number of them. I saw them while I was chopping down trees. I’m pretty sure that army is something we absolutely cannot resist.” Once he finished speaking, he scratched his head, somewhat embarrassed.

Sura said, “Let me answer. I’m an assassin; scouting is one of our specialties.”

Oliveira obviously knew that assassins were the best intelligence agents, so his gaze immediately shifted towards Sura.

Sura mulled over it, then said, “From my observations, the dispatched beastmen army is made up of four races altogether—all expert climbers. Specifically, there were Apemen, Tigermen, Leopardmen, and Behemoths. Among this lineup, the Behemoths are the strongest. Taking into account their reflective hair and large, visible figures, I’m certain that within this Behemoth legion, there is at least one Gold Behemoth. Although I’m uncertain about the number of Silver Behemoths, there is no less than seventy Berserk Behemoths.”

Listening to Sura’s report, Oliveira couldn’t help but suck in a large breath of cold air. The rest of that beastmen army wasn’t needed; just those Behemoths could easily raze the current Konya City to the ground. “Continue speaking. How many were there of the other beastmen races?”

Sura continued. “The Apemen made up the largest portion of the army, roughly fifteen thousand to twenty thousand. The Tigermen and Leopardmen numbers were a bit smaller. Just now, however, our fire attack was very

successful. The widespread attack caused their army to descend into chaos. Simultaneously, the rolling logs and the fire also killed quite a few of the beastmen.”

Chapter 31 – Gold Behemoth (III)

Oliveira nodded and said, “Apart from a few specific races, the vast majority of beastmen are naturally afraid of fire. In past wars, the attacks of our Fire Mages were the most effective. How big do you estimate their losses to be?”

Sura shook his head and replied, “It was too chaotic; I was unable to determine the extent of the damage they suffered. I believe, however, that they will want to assemble their entire army, so they will wait for the fire and chaos to completely die out. Furthermore, since the trees on the mountain are very tall, the fire should not die out anytime soon. As long as it doesn’t rain or snow, the fire wouldn’t be extinguished for two days at the very least.”

Oliveira spoke, worried, “The only thing I fear now is that they might not wait to reassemble their army and will attack immediately instead. Konya City doesn’t have a strong defense. The city walls are only fifteen meters high, which is about the same height as an average Behemoth. We only have three genuine Gigantic Dragons altogether, none of which are fully matured. A tamed dragon cannot successfully confront a Behemoth; it’s not strong enough. At most, it can only delay them.”

Ye Yin Zhu interjected, “Elder Brother Oliveira, how long until we get reinforcements?”

Hearing Ye Yin Zhu’s question, Oliveira’s expression immediately became uglier. Glancing at the others some distance away, he lowered his voice and said, “I used a magic summon to report to my grandfather about the beastmen ambush on Konya City. Grandfather said, however, that there is immense pressure on Sacred Heart City right now. Mjolnir Stronghold’s beastmen are just as strong as the main army. Furthermore, there are many incredibly fast Wolf Cavalry attacks on Sacred Heart City’s perimeter. Defense is extremely strained. He has already requested reinforcements from the Empire. For the time being,

he can only send my second elder brother and five hundred Dragon Cavalry as backup. He doesn't know when the other reinforcements can arrive."

"What?" Ye Yin Zhu whispered, "If it's like that, then our location..."

Oliveira's eyes displayed a determined light. An unshakeable aura exuded from his body, an aura created through a baptism of bloodshed and death, of iron and steel, and that only presented itself in soldiers during precarious situations as it arose involuntarily. "Regardless of the response, as a Milan Empire soldier and as a future Dragon Cavalryman, I will absolutely not cower. Even if we must fight to the very last man, the Dragon Cavalrymen and I will hold this line. We must delay the beastmen for as long as possible and give the Empire enough time to prepare. Yin Zhu, I've thought it out. You need to lead the students and evacuate; return as quickly as possible to the Institution. At present, the war has gotten out of hand. Everyone here is the best of the best at the Institution. They are the future of the Milan Empire; none must not die!"

Hearing his speech, Ye Yin Zhu and Sura couldn't help but be moved. This fifth-year upperclassman had gained both of their respects. Sura nodded and said, "This is perhaps the best solution."

"I won't leave." Ye Yin Zhu shook his head. Although his voice was serene, his tone was exceptionally firm.

Oliveira frowned. "Yin Zhu, now is not the time to show off your bravery. You should know that all of you are elite students with bright futures. You absolutely cannot forfeit this here."

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. His smile was very pure and very gentle. "I understand. But, I won't leave."

"You..." Oliveira's eyes dilated. He suddenly realized that this mage, who had previously received his sword blow, had a one-of-a-kind personality. This personality of his was what both his elder brother and grandfather had already seen.

Sura anxiously spoke up. "Yin Zhu, if we don't leave now, it'll be too late."

Ye Yin Zhu glanced at Sura. "You leave. Although I am not a member of the Milan Empire, I am a Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts student. I have

a duty to protect this place. Besides, I am also a mage within the Milan Imperial Army.”

Sura sighed, exclaiming, “Since you insist on risking your life, then I will follow you.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. “I knew that you hate to part with me. Actually, we might be able to defend Konya City.”

Oliveira stared blankly. “Could it be that you have a plan?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Elder Brother Oliveira, did you forget the military stratagems you had told me earlier? You said that when confronting a well-matched adversary, you need to aim at their weaknesses. When confronting an adversary of greater strength, however, you need to reveal as much power as you can in front of them. Our fire attack may not have diminished the beastmen army’s strength, but at least it has left them panic-stricken. This false assumption they’ll be under will give us some time to prepare.”

Oliveira smacked his forehead. “Right! Look at me; normally I’m calm, but under duress, I am inferior to your incisiveness. Yin Zhu, it seems that you could very well become an outstanding general.”

Sura said doubtfully, “What nonsense are you two going on about?”

Oliveira laughed and said, “It’s not nonsense. Yin Zhu’s idea is to scare the beastmen first and make them unwilling to rush into an attack, possibly even making them retreat. Unfortunately, beastmen are naturally headstrong, unlike humanity’s cautiousness. If not, we might really have a chance. Scaring them, however, will at least delay them for some time. Now I finally understand the hidden meaning of life.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes displayed a pondering light before he suddenly said, “Elder Brother Oliveira, if you can delay the beastmen for a while, we might really be able to withstand their attack. The condition, however, is to let all of the mages from the Institution stay here and have them listen to me as their leader.”

Oliveira exclaimed, dumbstruck, “Are you saying that you have some way to block a beastmen army of nearly a hundred Behemoths? Mages? We only have forty mages, and the strongest amongst them is merely a Primary Level Cyan

Rank. This is impossible. Not a single one of you can even injure a Behemoth!”

Ye Yin Zhu countered firmly, “Magic is a profound art. If someone had told you that the Divine Music division could become the Freshman Competition Champion this year, would you have believed them? Elder Brother Oliveira, please give me this chance. I have to try.”

Oliveira hesitated for a moment before resolutely saying, “No. Yin Zhu, it’s not that I don’t trust you. If Konya City’s mages were a part of the army, I would absolutely allow you to try. You should know, however, that these students are not only exceedingly outstanding, but practically all of them have a very powerful background. Even our Violet Clan cannot afford to bear such a loss. Furthermore, my youngest sister is among the student mages. I’m not afraid of death, but I cannot trouble my family. Even my grandfather cannot take such a burdensome responsibility.”

“I will take on this responsibility for you.” At this pivotal moment, an entrancing and tranquil voice rang out. Xiang Luan and Hai Yang, hand in hand, had actually walked forward. The one who had spoken was the most beautiful woman of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts—Xiang Luan.

Oliveira stared at her in amazement. “You?”

The mischievous smile that normally graced Xiang Luan’s face was gone. She nodded calmly and said, “Correct. I will. My name is Berlusconi Xiang Luan. My father’s name is Berlusconi Silvio. Does Senior Oliveira not believe that I have the qualifications to take this responsibility?” As she said this, she revealed an emblem in her hand. It glittered with rays of red and black light. The emblem was in the shape of a pentagon, its tip pointed downward. The emblem was inlaid with three strips of red and black metal. The red was a kind of extremely precious, pure gold while the black was crow gold. At the exact center of the emblem was a brilliant diamond crafted into the form of a shield, with a cross-sculpted ruby embedded within it. This emblem was made of shockingly rare materials, not to mention the excessive magical aura it leaked.

Ye Yin Zhu clearly didn’t understand the implications of Xiang Luan’s name, but beside him, Sura and Oliveira had become completely lifeless. They both cried out in unison, “Milan Ruby Cross Shield Emblem?!”

Beside Xiang Luan, Hai Yang delicately called out, “Oliveira, are you not going to greet the Imperial Princess?”

Oliveira immediately reacted. Putong! Sinking to one knee, he spoke with reverence, “Respects to Princess Xiang Luan.”

Berlusconi—the Milan Imperial Family’s last name. Berlusconi Silvio was the full name of the Milan Empire’s Emperor.

Xiang Luan nodded, saying, “Please rise, my Knight. I have heard everything you have said just now. I, on the behalf of Milan, acknowledge your strength and feel gratified. Now, as the Imperial Princess, I order that from now on, no one may leave Konya City unless under my command. All mages must unite under Ye Yin Zhu, including myself.”

Oliveira lifted his head in shock. “No, your Highness, how can this be? You’re actually here? In that case, I have even higher grounds to evacuate you. You must leave, even if it goes against your order. As a member of the Violet Clan, I must prioritize the safety of the royal family above all else.” How could he have imagined that the Imperial Princess would actually be a part of this campaign of Milan students?

The majority of those studying at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts were children of nobility, all of whom had concealed their identity, the royal family even more so. Only with such measures would they not stand out among the masses. This was a policy of the Milan Empire to restrict the royal family’s influence. Because of the open-mindedness of the royal family, the Milan Empire had become even stronger, allowing it to be the strongest national power on the Longinus continent.

Xiang Luan spoke, slight anger coloring her voice. “What? You dare to go against my order?”

Oliveira remained firm as he answered, “No. I do not dare. Milan law decrees, however, that princesses have no place in politics, especially not as a commander of an army. I apologize, your Highness, but I cannot accept your order.”

“You...” Xiang Luan obviously knew that Oliveira was doing this to protect her, but deep in her heart, she was completely convinced that Ye Yin Zhu could bring

about a miracle once more. “Oliveira, according to the law, I am indeed incapable politically, but this is currently an extraordinary situation. Don’t tell me that you believe that our current defense army can withstand the Behemoth’s attack? Just now, in the mountains, I saw first-hand Ye Yin Zhu’s power and the resulting disastrous losses the beastmen suffered at his hand. He could do it once, so why can’t he do it a second time?”

Oliveira solemnly said, “His success in the mountain range was essential, but first and foremost, Konya City is on an open plain. Your Highness, we don’t have much time left. I will immediately arrange for people to guard your evacuation.”

“Oliveira, you really aren’t obeying my order.” Xiang Luan was furious. At this moment, her imposing aura intensified.

“Your Highness, I apologize. According to Imperial law, your command is invalid.”

“Then, what about my command?” A lazy voice echoed. Everyone’s gazes shifted towards the direction of the voice, only to see a tall figure clad in heavy armor. A heavy sword in hand, the warrior walked forward. It was very obvious that he was a Heavy Sword division student of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. He took off his helmet, revealing his sun-kissed face to everyone.

Ye Yin Zhu said in surprise, “Fisichella, you?” Just as the sound of his voice faded away, he stared at the emblem in Fisichella’s hand, which had been pulled out from somewhere unknowingly. It was identical to Xiang Luan’s Milan Ruby Cross Shield Emblem.

“Yes! Idol, it’s me. Big sis, this brother came just in time.” Fisichella still looked the same, a happy smile on his face. It looked like he didn’t know what worry was.

Oliveira’s eyes widened. He nearly collapsed unconscious on the ground as he thought to himself, Heavens! Why must you bully me?! The princess I can argue with, but why is the prince also here? It was common knowledge that the Milan Empire’s Emperor, Berlusconi Silvio, only had one son and one daughter.

Hai Yang bowed slightly and said, “Greetings, your Highness the Prince.”

Fisichella chuckled and said, “Older Sister Hai Yang, you need not be formal

with me. I'm afraid my big sis will beat me."

Sura stood there blankly. On the contrary, Ye Yin Zhu didn't have a large reaction. He had lived in the Desolate Jade Sea since infancy, so he didn't have a very strong impression of nobility. Princess? Prince? Weren't they still people?

"Senior Xiang Luan, so you're actually a princess! I also didn't expect Fisichella to be Senior Xiang Luan's younger brother either. But, why don't the two of you look alike?" Ye Yin Zhu inquisitively asked.

Fisichella bitterly smiled. "We are half siblings! You didn't say I'm uglier than my big sis, so I'm very glad. Senior Oliveira, according to Imperial law, as the Crown Prince of the Empire, I have the power to take control of, at most, a hundred thousand troops at any time and any place, unless my Imperial Father is present, right?"

Even though Oliveira didn't want to admit it, he still nodded. Helpless, he replied, "Yes, your Highness."

Fisichella declared, "Alright. I now order you to listen to my big sis' previous orders. Specifically, the ones you were fighting against."

Oliveira's heart sped up. So troublesome! If the princess and prince were to die here, the entire Violet Clan would not survive the responsibility! "Your Highness the Prince, this won't do..."

Fisichella intoned deeply, "Enough. Senior Oliveira, bear this in mind. The Berlusconi Family are not cowards. I believe my idol has the ability to ward off the enemy. If I shrink back when the time for battle approaches, then my people will be slaughtered by the beastmen. I absolutely refuse to watch this happen. If my older sister and I leave now, we will live the rest of our lives with this tremendous disgrace. We do not have any more time to waste at the moment. General, carry out your duty; execute the order. My older sister and I will undertake the responsibility. Even if we die here in this battle, I guarantee that no one will make things difficult for the Violet Clan. I will report this to the reinforcements via a magical communication device, making my intentions clear."

Staring at Fisichella and Xiang Luan's determined gazes, Oliveira knew that it would be useless to argue further. Even if he wanted to use force, it would be

impossible. With the Milan Ruby Cross Shield Emblem, the entire Dragon Cavalry would only comply with the royal family's order.

"Affirmative. Yin Zhu, everything will be up to you. I will head out to the frontlines with the army to stall for you as much as possible. The beastmen will only be able to enter Konya City over my dead body." After speaking these words, Oliveira sped off with haste. He must notify Maldini of the current situation immediately. Even if the walls of Sacred Heart City fell, military personnel would be sent to save Konya City!

Watching Oliveira depart, Fisichella relaxed. Chuckling by Xiang Luan's side, he remarked, "Big sis, what do you think? I did pretty well, didn't I?"

Xiang Luan hummed. "Today you acted like a man. You're not leaving? Do you think that just because you revealed your identity, you don't need to go to war? Don't forget what you said just now."

"Yes, your Highness." Fisichella abruptly stood at attention, saluting Xiang Luan as custom for the military. He immediately sped off as well.

Xiang Luan stared at his departing figure before giggling. "This boy! I didn't expect that a little of Imperial Father's brilliance would shine through when facing this crisis. It appears that he will be a good emperor in the future."

Ye Yin Zhu lightly sighed, saying, "Senior Xiang Luan—oh. I meant Princess Xiang Luan; I am somewhat regretful."

Xiang Luan smiled slightly. "What are you regretful for? Could our identities have diminished your will to fight?"

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head. He explained, "I had merely hoped to not involve everyone. Without the two of you helping, however, I wouldn't be able to accomplish anything."

Chapter 32 – The Return of the Five Zithers (I)

Xiang Luan smiled and said, “I trust you. So what are your orders for me?”

Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes displayed a firm resolve as he declared, “We’ll climb the city walls.”

“Okay. I’ll follow your insane plan. If you succeed, you’ll be the hero of the Milan Empire. If you fail, we’ll all go see the gods together.”

Ye Yin Zhu suddenly realized that Xiang Luan’s smile was even more touching than before.

Sura said, “You guys climb the city walls; I’ll go help Oliveira.”

Xiang Luan disagreed. “No, you stay here. You are an assassin, so your skills would be restricted if you were at the frontlines of the battlefield. It would be better to stay here and help Yin Zhu; he might need your assistance. Didn’t he need it back in the mountain range?”

Sura looked at Ye Yin Zhu, who nodded at him.

When the four of them arrived at the top of the city walls, the student mages of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts were already waiting there for them. It was Oliveira who had made them come. Since he couldn’t prevent the princess and prince from fighting, he could only fully support their plans.

The mages had clearly known Xiang Luan’s identity. When they saw the four of them arrive on the city walls, all of the student mages bowed to her simultaneously.

Oliveira suddenly appeared, but currently his expression was rather unsightly. He focused on Ye Yin Zhu. “I’ll take my leave then. Yin Zhu, honestly speaking, I don’t know whether I should admire your bravery or hate your recklessness, but the situation has already proceeded to this point; it’s too late to turn back now. Anyway, all of you cannot lose. I will pray for you. Your Highness the Princess, even though I don’t know what will happen next, I was still unable to convince His Highness the Prince to not take risks. I ask of you, please keep him here in the city.”

Xiang Luan also knew that this was Oliveira's bottom line, so she nodded her head and assented. "Okay. You can say it is my order to have him come back to the city. Also, you are to take all of the soldiers protecting the city with you. Even one more person will increase our power significantly."

Oliveira shook his head and said, "That won't work. The soldiers originally guarding the city will still stay. Otherwise they will react counterproductively. Princess, I hope I can still see you again later."

Xiang Luan's eyes darkened. "Praise Blue Dias, brave Knight. You will definitely return victorious."

Oliveira didn't say anything else as he turned and left.

"Elder Brother Oliveira, wait!" Ye Yin Zhu suddenly shouted out toward Oliveira.

Oliveira stopped and pivoted to look back, only to see Yin Zhu quickly walking towards him. Ye Yin Zhu spoke softly so that only the two of them could hear. "Elder Brother Oliveira, remember what you taught me. In order to win the war, use any and all methods, right?"

Oliveira nodded and whispered, "Of course. As long as you can ultimately win in the end, use any means possible. Even if it's despicable and wretched, spare nothing."

Ye Yin Zhu spoke, relieved, "Then I feel reassured. It seems that my decision isn't wrong. But Elder Brother Oliveira, I heard that you have a Genuine Gigantic Dragon. Please, do not summon it. Use your Maginot Iron Dragon to fight."

Oliveira was confused. "Why?"

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and explained, "I cannot tell you, but please trust me."

Oliveira frowned. "But an Earth Dragon's fighting strength is far inferior to my Water-attribute Gigantic Dragon. There is a tremendous disparity between our strength and the beastmen army's."

Ye Yin Zhu hesitated for a moment before saying, "Then, only if it's a last resort. Otherwise, please don't summon it. The same applies to Nesta."

Although Oliveira didn't clearly understand why Ye Yin Zhu said this, he vaguely felt that Ye Yin Zhu was saying this for his own good.

"Alright. Yin Zhu, the outcome of today's battle not only determines the losses the Empire will incur, but it also determines the Empire's future. If the worst happens, please promise me one thing."

"Promise what?" Ye Yin Zhu puzzledly asked.

Oliveira grimly said, "Take the Prince and Princess and escape. Among the students, Nesta and my younger sister are both flight-capable as they have Gigantic Dragons. At the very least, they can take you all and leave. I have already warned them. If either the Princess or Prince resists, use force. Do you understand? Neither of them is your match."

Staring profoundly at Oliveira, Ye Yin Zhu nodded. "I understand."

Oliveira turned and left while Ye Yin Zhu returned to his original location.

Xiang Luan said, "Fellow students, we are about to face the beastmen legion. Even though I cannot personally confirm that your clan belongs to the Empire, I do know that your clans have influential status. I hope that you will be able to inherit your clan's honor. For the sake of Milan, for the sake of your clan, go all out in this war. As long as we are able to withstand the legion until reinforcements arrive, you will all be heroes of the Empire."

Rolande earnestly said, "So we can finally fight! I thought we would've been shut inside here the entire time. Senior Xiang Luan—oh, may I still call you this?"

Xiang Luan smiled slightly and assented. "Of course you may."

Rolande continued, "I have been looking forward to the day we can be on the battlefield. Relax, even if I use up the last drop of my magic, I will also defend the Empire's territory and uphold my Violet Clan's honor." The excitement in her eyes was absolutely not fake, her beautiful irises even emitting a bloodthirsty radiance. She was the epitome of a tyrannical woman.

Xiang Luan's gaze swept over all of the mages, somewhat surprised to discover that these students of Milan Institution held no trace of fear at all. The vast majority of them were more or less like Rolande. In fact, she failed to consider that these children of nobility had never experienced a genuine war, so they

naturally didn't know of war's cruelty. Furthermore, they were all mages, and with their current position atop the city wall, they were far from needing to worry about their safety.

Milan Empire and Mjolnir Stronghold had not been at war for only one or two days. In addition, the beastmen had never once succeeded in breaching into the Milan Empire's territory, so they had a lot of confidence that a large amount of reinforcements was being sent. Of course, this was definitely related to Oliveira's previous report for quick reinforcement before he had sent them to the city.

"Good. Since that is the case, starting now, everyone will listen and obey Ye Yin Zhu's orders, including myself. Sura, please hang this ensign from atop the city wall. If the enemy attacks, I will be at the very front."

At this crucial moment, Xiang Luan fully revealed her unyielding character. Her attractive face glimmered with pure and holy rays of light as she withdrew an ensign from her space ring and handed it over to Sura.

Sura's hand trembled as he accepted it. Carrying the ensign, his body practically transformed into a streak of lightning as he quietly flew up to the flagpole. With quick and efficient movements, he hung the large ensign.

The ensign was embroidered with a large shield, the Ruby Cross symbol atop an alternating backdrop of red and black vertical stripes. It was very similar to the Milan Ruby Cross Shield Emblem Xiang Luan had. On both sides of the shield, however, was the embroidery of a dragon, one gold and one silver. Sunlight shone down on the ensign, causing it to sparkle and shimmer.

Looking at this ensign, regardless of whether it were the mages atop the city walls or the Dragon Cavalry that had finished assembling inside the city and were rushing out the city gate, they all couldn't help themselves from being fired up at this very moment. They naturally understood what this ensign represented. Although it was not the national Milanese flag, it was still the flag of the Milan Royal Family, the Berlusconi Clan flag. Only direct descendents of the Empire's Royal Family could use it. Xiang Luan used it to tell all of the warriors and mages that the Milanese Royal Family was with them.

Xiang Luan's gaze drifted toward Ye Yin Zhu. "The rest is up to you. Everyone will listen to your orders. Go ahead."

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, “Are there any Water Mages?”

“I am.” A youth stepped forward. He appeared to be over twenty years old, with average looks. He was obviously an upperclassman at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.

Ye Yin Zhu asked, “How long would it take for you to make me an ice block approximately ten meters in width and at least a meter thick?”

The Water Mage hesitated before answering, “The weather is currently cold, so it’s relatively easy to freeze water. I can accomplish this in an hour.”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, “Good. Stand here, behind me, and start making this block of ice right now. The thickness must be at least a meter thick, and its surface as smooth as possible. The side of the ice facing me should be concave. Begin now. Don’t be stingy with magic; use all of your magical reserves to create the ice.”

The Water Mage didn’t have many doubts, so faint green light sparkled and began condensing around his body. The electric-green light indicated that he was an Intermediate Level Green Rank Great Mage. Along with the display of the brilliant green rays, the atmosphere immediately became ice-cold.

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t supervise the Water Mage. He once again asked the crowd of mages, “Who here is a Spatial Domain Mage? Step forward.”

Three people left the crowd, among them Chang Hao. They all confirmed themselves to be Spatial Domain Mages.

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Can you cast a Magic Amplification spell? The greater the amplification effects, the better. At the same time, I also need a voice amplification spell. Can you do this?”

The oldest of the Spatial Domain Mages said, “If I was given enough magical crystals or magical cores from magical beasts, I can cast a Voice Magnification spell, but a Magic Amplification spell is somewhat difficult. That spell is too complicated and too difficult to set up. I would need time to practice. I’m afraid that I am unable to complete it in a short amount of time. My magic rank is insufficient.”

Xiang Luan said, “I have magical crystals with me. Spatial Domain, right?”

Here.” Worthy of her status as the Princess of the strongest power in the Longinus Continent, she raised her hand and extracted a pouch of gems from her space ring, handing over said pouch to the mage in question.

Chapter 32 – The Return of the Five Zithers (II)

The mage opened the pouch and glanced inside, instantly becoming dumbfounded at its contents. This pouch contained the purest and highest quality Spatial Domain magical crystals. Each gem was cut into a hexagon shape and flickered with an intense silver light. Within this light was the extremely rich magical elements of the Spatial Domain.

“Heavens! These are Spatial Domain silver crystals. With just one, I can cast an amplification spell that can last a month.” A sky of glittering stars glimmered within the Spatial Domain Mage’s eyes. After all, how could a mage like him not like these type of high quality crystals? Even though the crystals were unable to replenish a mage’s magical reserves, the magic within the crystal itself could be used to evoke magic, significantly increasing the strength of the spell. Just one of these extremely pure Spatial Domain silver crystals was worth over a thousand gold coins! Even then, they were priceless when placed in the markets.

Xiang Luan smiled. “All of these are for you to use; all of them. The crystals’ magical stores are immense, so your amplification spell should be greatly strengthened.”

“That is for certain, but it seems like too much of a waste.”

Xiang Luan said, “Don’t give me money excuses. Just do as I say.”

The Spatial Domain Mage immediately grasped a Spatial Domain silver crystal and excitedly began casting his spell.

Ye Yin Zhu looked at Chang Hao. “Is a Magic Amplification spell really that difficult? I don’t need my magic amplified; so long as my spiritual force can become even more condensed.”

Chang Hao pondered aloud, “I can try. It will require a Spiritual Domain Force

Field. If her Highness can produce more Spatial Domain silver crystals like earlier, I'll have a 70% chance of success."

"You need to set up a Spiritual Domain Force Field?" The other senior Spatial Domain mage asked disdainfully.

Chang Hao glanced at him before saying, "Why not? I am a part of the domain branch of the Spatial Domain division. It's just that my magical reserves are insufficient, so I need to use this domain spell. That's why I need these Spatial Domain silver crystals."

Xiang Luan said, "This is no issue. As long as you can succeed, all is well. Even if you only have a 10% chance of success, we need to at least try once." As she said this, she withdrew an identical pouch of Spatial silver crystals and passed it to Chang Hao.

Chang Hao laughed mischievously, gave Ye Yin Zhu a thumbs-up, and immediately began setting up the domain. As a member of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects, he already had a vague idea about Ye Yin Zhu's intention. He was merely unable to confirm the specifics of the plan.

The mages present were all highly intelligent. Without an intelligent and flexible mind, becoming a mage wasn't easy. Chang Hao wasn't the only one to guess Ye Yin Zhu's intention.

Rolande knitted her brows. "Ye Yin Zhu, you aren't thinking of using Divine Music magic to fend off the beastmen, are you?"

Ye Yin Zhu looked at her before saying, "Why not?"

Rolande frowned and asked, "Offensively, how strong is your Divine Music magic?"

Ye Yin Zhu smiled faintly. "Who said that a problem cannot be solved without firepower? I'll only ask you one thing. In all of these divisions of the Magic Department, in a situation near identical to this, which division's magical attack range is able to surpass that of the Divine Music division?"

"This..." Rolande was immediately speechless. Divine Music magic; if it could be heard, the attack would be effective. In terms of ability to perform magic from a distance, it was indeed the magical discipline with the highest strength.

Xiang Luan clapped her hands and said, “Well then, listen to Yin Zhu’s orders. Only, Yin Zhu, you only have Yellow Rank magic. Even with spiritual force condensation and amplification spells, I’m afraid that...”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded, saying, “By myself, I will definitely not succeed. I am not alone, however. Every single one of you is a part of my magic.”

Konya City; this small town had been peaceful for who knew how many years, but at last, it would face the glory of war. This one named Ye Yin Zhu, since this day had begun, would forever be remembered in Konya City’s history.



Dis stopped at the bottom of the mountain. His lungs were currently heaving with barely restrained anger. More than half the day had passed, and the entire beastmen army had finally traversed past this mountain peak, only requiring them to gather at the bottom before their charge. The wildfire and rolling logs brought about losses that bore fruit for their opponents.

“Damnit, are those bastards made of paper?1 Along with those who died, how can so many of them lose the will to fight?!” Dis roared. Not to mention the Tigermen, Leopardmen, and Apemen elites, the Behemoths by his side also kept quiet out of fear and refrained from speaking a single word. Who could’ve known that the consequences of Dis’ wrath would be so frightening. His nickname among the Behemoths was ‘Golden Dynamite.’ He apparently forgot that when he slammed his fist into the ground atop that mountain, eighty Berserk Behemoths had rolled down the mountain. This directly led to the casualties climbing even higher, as the losses from the rolling Behemoths were larger than the rolling trees.

Perkins was also very angry, but he was slightly more rational than Dis and not surprised that their mood would be so unstable. Other than the Behemoths, they had brought forty thousand troops. That unexpectedly large fire had killed off no less than a quarter of the army. This didn’t just reduce their fighting strength. Currently, the three beastmen races with decent fighting strength were practically inconsequential. Of the majority of the beastmen warriors who had faced the scorching flames, those high and mighty warriors with loftiness that exuded from them had long since been obliterated completely. Each and

every single one now had a head filthy with grime. As for the army's countenance, it was better to not mention it.

"Elder Brother, the Milanese of Konya City are coming out," Perkins coldly reminded Dis.

Dis' bloodshot gaze looked in the direction of Konya City, whose city walls were easily eclipsed in height by his body. The city gates were opened wide, and the rumbling roars from behind those gates was something he was familiar with, a loathsome smell. With heavy steps, those vile existences rushed out of Konya City.

Perkins bellowed with rage, "It's the Dragon Cavalry! Those Milanese have indeed prepared early on. Apparently, this bullshit plan of Emerson was nothing more than a trap. When we return, I'm going to tear him apart!" The Behemoth Legion's arch-nemesis was the Dragon Cavalry; he was very well acquainted with this animosity. Just like how Behemoths were the trump card of the beastmen, the Dragon Cavalry was the trump card of the human race. The Dragon Cavalry in this miniscule Konya City naturally impacted their heart tremendously.

Right, that was indeed the Dragon Cavalry that was currently dashing out of Konya City. The current head of this charge was wearing heavy blue armor and was sitting upright atop the back of a huge Maginot Iron Dragon. In his hand was a seven meter long dragonspear. His entire body released an extremely valiant aura. Behind him, five hundred and sixty Dragon Cavalry were assembled for war; the Maginot Iron Dragon Cavalry were situated in the center with the Earthbound Swift Dragon Cavalry on both sides.

This made Dis especially wrathful, as this Dragon Cavalry formation was the most aggressive model. Without keeping any depth, these five hundred and sixty men lined up horizontally for battle, practically covering Konya City's walls completely.

Dis kneaded his fist. "They are courting death!" Just as he was about to charge forward, Perkins grabbed his shoulder.

"Elder Brother, we cannot attack right now," Perkins stated coldly.

Dis snarled, "Why? Don't tell me that you want those Milanese bastards to ridicule our current appearance?"

Perkins said, “Elder Brother, calm down. Can you not see it? This is a trap by the Milanese. The mountains surround this city; they’re up to no good. If this is an ambush, even if we are fearless, the army has to stay here.”

Dis snorted. “They shouldn’t even be here. These soldiers are simply trash; our Behemoths are enough to deal with them.”

Perkins reasoned, “Let’s wait first and allow our brethren to rest for a while. At least wait until they regain a bit of their strength before charging swiftly once more. Elder Brother, can you not sense that this miniscule town unexpectedly has a magical aura coming from within? It doesn’t seem weak. In addition, when we were climbing up that mountain, I had also sensed a Silver Dragon’s loathsome scent.”

Dis’ bloodshot eyes dilated instantly. He didn’t fear the humans nor the Dragon Cavalry. But even though he was a Gold Behemoth, an encounter with a genuine Gigantic Dragon was something to be prudent of. After all, a Gigantic Dragon held the advantage of flight over the Behemoths. In particular, this Silver Dragon was a magical dragon. As long as it maintained its high altitude, it could continually cast magic down upon its enemies. The Gold Behemoths would have absolutely no way of catching it. Even a brave Behemoth wouldn’t desire becoming the practice target for a magical dragon.



Oliveira lifted the dragonspear in his hand, and the entire Dragon Cavalry roared in response. At this moment, his helmet hid the smile upon his face. In his heart, he inwardly thought, It seems that Ye Yin Zhu’s fire attack was extraordinarily effective. The beastmen army’s morale is not only low, their numbers are also lower than I expected. It’s a pity that we have no real army. If the army had taken advantage of this and attacked, even if they were unable to deal with the Behemoths, they could kill the majority of those slightly inferior beastmen.

Hong——

Under Oliveira’s command, the entire Dragon Cavalry charged forward simultaneously. Each movement was synchronized, and the resulting heavy booms shook the earth.

The Milan Empire’s Dragon Cavalry; as the Empire’s trump card, they were armed to the teeth, so to say. Every Dragon Cavalryman was equipped with a Gigantic Dragon, totaling ten thousand gold coins in cost.

A Gigantic Dragon was like a knight, its body armored. A Maginot Iron Dragon’s body was covered with heavy armor made of top-notch superior iron that protected its entire body. A thick, meter-long steel pike extended from its head and shoulders. An Earthbound Swift Dragon’s body was also covered with light armor. Although its defensive power was somewhat lacking, its flexibility was optimized to the max.

Dragon Cavalrymen armor was eight centimeters thick, and each Dragon Cavalrymen possessed dou qi of Orange Rank or higher. Furthermore, they all possessed the noble rank of ‘Knight.’ Each of them held a heavy dragonspear in their hands with lengths of five or seven meters. A Maginot Iron Dragon Knight used a seven meter long heavy dragonspear while a Earthbound Swift Dragon Knight used a five meter long heavy dragonspear.

This cavalry troop could only be described as an unstoppable force when attacking. A general of the mainland would categorize a Dragon Cavalry force of five hundred to be a legion. Not only was this equivalent to a Heavy Cavalry legion, it was also the strongest human military force.

Of course, when the Dragon Cavalry was compared with the beastmen, they appeared insignificant. Even if the Apemen, Tigermen, and Leopardmen were disregarded, the Behemoths already surpassed their strength exponentially. Regarding the powerful beastmen, who were unparalleled on the ground, assessments were very simple. Ten human legions equalled a hundred of those paragons. Although this was a slight exaggeration, it amply illustrated how strong the Behemoths were.

Chapter 32 – The Return of the Five Zithers (III)

Oliveira didn’t forge on; instead, he was simply sitting on his Earth Dragon’s back while coldly observing his adversary. At this moment, the beastmen had just descended the mountain. Their bedraggled appearance could only be

described as miserable; this was, of course, apart from the Behemoth legion at the center of the troops, as they were still intact. The other three beastmen races, however, appeared to have already lost their will to fight. Currently, he could only pray that Ye Yin Zhu's countermeasure was a success, praying also for the beastmen attack to be delayed for a long while and thus allowing the mages on the city walls ample preparation time.

Oliveira realized that for the very first time, he was nervous. In the future, when he became the top ranked general of the Milan Empire, he would think back on his military career and name the Battle of Konya City as his most dangerous and most unbalanced battle.

From his side, Oliveira observed his enemies, while the opposing beastmen observed the humans. Dis could not see any strong advantages this Dragon Cavalry possessed. The mages atop Konya City's walls, however, made him feel a bit uneasy.

Mages were the noblest vocation in every country on this continent. In each country, they were only ever assigned to the principal regiment. For mages to appear in a small town like Konya City, in addition to the prior fire attack, these happenstances made this Golden Dynamite somewhat hesitant. He naturally didn't know that when he'd transmitted down his orders to the army to recover themselves, the scales of this battle had already begun to quietly tilt.

Gold Behemoth Perkins' gaze didn't focus solely on scanning the city walls up and down like Dis; all along, he had been attentively watching the very top of Konya City, relying on his superior Behemoth eyesight to clearly see the young mage standing atop the center of Konya City's walls.

Sunlight shone down on that white magical robe, causing the glossy fabric to shimmer a brilliance similar to that of lustrous gems. Black hair naturally framed his face, his whole appearance handsome with a scholarly aura radiating from him. His calm and collected expression led to the impression that he had already grasped everything on the battlefield. Most of all, his two black eyes shone like stars, an abyssal clarity present within them. Since the appearance of the Dragon Cavalry, this young, handsome mage stood motionless atop the city walls as he watched the battlefield. Perkins faintly sensed that this mage was the true pillar of the Milan Empire's army.

The man Perkins was looking at was Ye Yin Zhu, who stood there because he wanted to always be able to determine the beastmen's movements and mobilize his side accordingly. A second passed by. To the Milan Empire's army, each passing second increased their chances of success. Regardless of the preparations on the city wall or the highly anticipated reinforcements, all they needed was time.



The green ice gradually expanded with the full efforts of the Ice Mage, already reaching the meter-thick requisite Ye Yin Zhu demanded. It was unknown whether it was because of the Imperial Princess or the pressure of the beastmen army that allowed this mage to bring out 120% of his strength, with his freezing speed was significantly faster than normal.

At this moment, however, the most conspicuous figure was not this Ice Mage nor the Spatial Domain Mage arranging the Voice Magnification Spell; instead, it was Chang Hao.

Chang Hao's method of arranging a Spatial Domain far exceeded all the mages' scope of knowledge. He used a special method to fix the Spatial Silver Crystals to the floor. As if he was playing chess, each placement followed a particular trajectory. His spiritual force drew up from beneath him, and the undulating magical elements in the air gradually became increasingly rich and powerful.

Apart from the Spatial Silver Crystals, he was also withdrawing from his space ring a few black gems of equal size, arranging them like he had done with the previous Spatial Silver Crystals in an alternating arrangement. His current arrangement did not resemble a magical formation at all; it looked like the city walls had become a vertical chess game. Every time he laid down a gem, he muttered to himself for a brief moment. 1

"Idol, isn't there something more useful for me to do?" Fisichella currently had nothing to do. At first, he thought that he would be going to war with Oliveira, but he had instead been forced to return with Xiang Luan's order. He also knew that he could've used his rank to participate in the battle, but he feared that the Dragon Cavalry's fighting strength would be drastically reduced in order to protect him. Therefore, he could only stay on top the city walls. Looking at all the

ages sitting down in preparation for their tasks, allowing them to maintain their magical reserves at peak performance, he also didn't know if there was anything useful he could do.

Ye Yin Zhu said, "Your Highness, you shouldn't call me Idol. Call me Yin Zhu."

Fisichella laughed mischievously, remarking, "How can I do that? My belief in Idol has not changed at all. When I first met you, I thought it was brave of you to join the Divine Music division to pick up girls, earning my respect. Later on, you revealed your formidable strength. Amongst all of our peers, you are the one I see as the person with the most tremendous talent. Even with the chicken rib magic of the Divine Music division... in your hands, that chicken became a phoenix."2

"Who are you calling a chicken?" Xiang Luan unimpressed voice suddenly rang out. Fisichella immediately couldn't make a sound, his face becoming rigid. His awkward appearance was extremely hilarious.

"Nothing. Big sis, I definitely wasn't talking about you. You're obviously the phoenix."

Hai Yang spoke up from beside Xiang Luan. "Then is his Highness talking about me?"

"Eh.... No, Older Sister Hai Yang. Oh! Right, are you two not meditating to maintain your optimum magical reserves?"

Xiang Luan unhappily glared at him before following Hai Yang to the side, entering a meditative state again like the rest of the mages.

Fisichella let out a breath of relief. He whispered to Ye Yin Zhu, "This older sister of mine! Sometimes she's nice, but other times, she has quite a temper. Idol, it would be better if it's like this; how about you pursue my older sister? I've seen that her feelings toward you is completely different from how she feels about others. Maybe you have a chance."

Ye Yin Zhu's face flushed red. Frowning, he said, "Your highness, you shouldn't speak such drivel. Do you not have a task? Good, I will give you one right now." As he said this, he used his dou qi to condense sound into a thin thread. He turned toward Fisichella and softly spoke a few lines.

“What? What are you making me do this time? This is out of the question. This is absolutely out of the question.” Fisichella’s head shook back and forth, as if it was about to fall off.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, “Why not? Your highness, you should know that this task is extremely critical. It can tremendously prevent our side from suffering losses. All of us mages are atop the city walls, with you and Sura being the only warriors. He is not as good as you are in this aspect. Don’t tell me that you don’t want our losses to be even slightly reduced?”

Fisichella doubtfully said, “Is this truly that important?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded seriously. “Of course.”

Fisichella said, “Then why can’t you tell them?”

Ye Yin Zhu bitterly smiled and explained, “Do you believe they will listen to my orders? They will only listen because of your identity as a prince. In addition, the results will only emerge when the war genuinely begins.”

Fisichella firmly said, “Since my role is so important, that’s good. They will listen. I’ll walk around, so you can go back to your work.”

He left, and Sura, who had been standing beside Ye Yin Zhu the entire time, asked, “So what did you end up having him do?”

Ye Yin Zhu mysteriously smiled before replying, “Naturally something that’s very important.”

Sura lowered his voice. “Yin Zhu, be honest. How much of a chance do you have in blocking the beastmen army? Even with a lot of mages, I don’t think your magic will affect the beastmen.”

Ye Yin Zhu forced a smile onto his face before saying, “I have a thirty percent chance.”

Sura widened his eyes. “Only a thirty percent chance, yet you dare to take it? You must know that atop these city walls are all of the direct blood relations to the Milan Emperor.”

Ye Yin Zhu displayed an innocent expression. “But when Elder Brother Oliveira gave me command of the military, I was told that this cannot be a retreat, to risk

it all for even a ten percent chance of success. To fight is to have a chance; anything else would be immediate defeat.”

Sura slightly revealed his feelings on his face. “I promised to follow you. Right now, though, I think this change in personality is no good. Forget about it. Since it’s already like this, I can only follow your insanity.”

Ye Yin Zhu sighed lightly. “It’s a pity that I lost all of my previous zithers. If I had the Withered Wood, Dragon’s Roar Zither, the chances of blocking the beastmen would be raised by at least ten percent. Different zither songs can only be played on specific zithers, with results varying drastically. Right now, I merely hope the Waterfall of Connecting Pearls Zither can produce a slightly good effect.”

Sura hesitated for a moment before asking, “Are you saying that if you could have the Withered Wood, Dragon’s Roar Zither, your magic’s effectiveness would increase?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded without the slightest hesitation.

Lowering his head, Sura’s eyes brimmed with a complex light. His heart violently struggled, as he didn’t know if he should do this. But if he did, he was truly terrified that he would lose Yin Zhu!

“Sura, are you alright? Yi, it seems that the beastmen have moved.” There was quite a bit of tension within Ye Yin Zhu’s voice.

Sura abruptly lifted his head to look into the distance. Sure enough, the beastmen at the foot of the mountain had already begun to mobilize. The Apemen and Leopardmen extended out into two wings while the Tigermen served as the center with the Behemoths behind them. This type of formation allowed them to attack Konya City’s walls from all sides.

Gritting his teeth, Sura knew he could no longer hesitate. His right hand grasped his chest. He withdrew a small box from somewhere and extended it out toward Ye Yin Zhu, placing it into the other’s hand. His voice slightly shuddered as he said, “Inside are the things you desire. Don’t ask anything. If we are still alive after today’s battle, I will explain everything to you.” The moment the words left his mouth, Sura’s body became a gray bolt of lightning as he disappeared from view.

Ye Yin Zhu stared blankly after him. He bowed his head to look at what Sura had given him. When he opened the case, his entire body froze immediately in shock. Within this small, slightly heavy case was a silver ring that was calmly releasing a very familiar magical fluctuation. Very familiar, just like that space ring he had lost when traveling to Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. The space ring that had his introduction letter, his travel expenses, and the five ranked zithers of the Zither Sect!

At this very moment, Ye Yin Zhu's entire body became lifeless. Even though he was a simple person, his memory and comprehension far exceeded an ordinary person's. In the blink of an eye, his mind had clearly pieced together everything.



"Sir! Sir, beseeching your honorable self to bestow a bit of coin!"

"For you."

"Thank you, thank you kind sir."

"Get up quickly, the ground is cold."

"Sir, thank you. You are indeed a good person."



He recalled the similarly slim figures... Ye Yin Zhu clearly understood, but at this very moment, his heart was, nevertheless, empty.

"Yin Zhu, the beastmen are approaching." Fisichella's voice suddenly rang out from somewhere close by.

Ye Yin Zhu returned to reality. At this moment, he could no longer think about the issue pertaining to Sura. His gaze shifted toward the distant grounds beyond the city wall. Sure enough, the beastmen army had already begun its slow forward march.



After an hour had passed, Dis could no longer restrain himself. Even though Perkins was still somewhat worried, he also didn’t believe that this Konya City had enough power to contend against their beastmen plundering legion. The Leopardmen that had previously been sent up the mountain for reconnaissance hadn’t yet sent back a danger signal. By this time, the army’s countenance had recovered slightly, and the beastmen began to slowly march toward the Dragon Cavalry in front of Konya City.

The Tigermen, who were originally in the center of the formation, suddenly split in half and moved to both sides while the Apemen and Leopardmen troops spread themselves out horizontally. A wing formation on either side unfolded with the center of the plundering legion consisting of the Behemoth legion with Gold Behemoth Dis and Perkins at the helm. Taking heavy steps forward, the earth rumbled beneath them. They slowly closed in on the Dragon Cavalry, who also held no doubts about how easily the Behemoths could tear their five hundred Dragon Cavalrymen to shreds.



At the top of the City Walls.

All of the mages awoke from their meditation and gathered around Ye Yin Zhu. Previously, Ye Yin Zhu had only told them to do their utmost to stay at their peak condition. By now, the rounded, concave mirror of ice behind Ye Yin Zhu had been completed. The spiritual force condensation and Voice Magnification spells had finished at nearly the same time.

“Yin Zhu, what do we do next?” Although Xiang Luan felt as calm as she could be, her voice still betrayed her nervous mood.

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Teacher Ferguson gave me a journal of his notes. Magic is the most miraculous discipline in the world, and branches of magic are constantly evolving. Even if mages are of the same magical discipline, each of them cultivates differently, which creates different magics of varying effects. But all mages have something in common—spiritual force. Regardless of what magic is being cultivated, spiritual force is pure and indistinguishable. I currently need to borrow everyone’s spiritual force; please give to me everything you can spare.”

A Spiritual Mage upperclassman spoke up in surprise, “Are you saying that you want to use that useless magic?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, “No magic is absolutely useless. Although this magic is only useful to a Spiritual Mage, it is extremely appropriate at this moment. Everyone, please open your mind, and do not give me any resistance. I am starting.”

The vast majority of the mages didn’t know what Ye Yin Zhu was up to, as this was the first time they had heard of a magic that could extract spiritual force. Only the Spiritual Mage who had spoken up early had a mysterious, pondering light reflected in his eyes, as well as a trace of fear emerging within them as well.

“Chang Hao, please activate the Spiritual Condensation Spell.” Lifting his hand, Ye Yin Zhu quickly slashed his hand through the air, an arc of light following his action. A low voice began to clearly recite a long and tedious incantation.

Chang Hao used his spiritual force to immediately activate the spell. Directly after, the silver and black gems he had arranged previously began flashing with rays of light. Above the city walls, an illusionary chess game took shape. Intangible elemental energy began to gather. Every mage clearly sensed their spiritual force being oppressed by this Spiritual Domain Field.

Ye Yin Zhu’s forehead suddenly brightened with a silvery brilliance. A dazzlingly beautiful silvery light rose, transforming into a star made of pure light, shooting into the sky, spiraling approximately a meter above his head, and emitting a faint yellow brilliance.

Only Spiritual Mages knew what this rich, fluctuating silvery star represented. It was obviously a Spiritual Mage’s lifeline! If this was destroyed, the mage would essentially become neutralized, turning brain-dead.

“... Using my Spiritual Imprint as a medium, our spirits will be connected! Please cooperate with me.” An arc of light rose from his chest and soared upward. Instantly, it blended with that silvery star of light. Rays of silvery starlight shot outward, and an awe-inspiring scene manifested. Threads of silver light gracefully streamed from the silver star and precisely linked to each mage’s forehead. Thirty-nine silvery threads, while not a lot, was still plenty.

The mages could all sense Ye Yin Zhu’s mood. A sense of friendliness transmitted from Ye Yin Zhu to the rest of them along with steady conviction. The silver thread created a link with an intense pulling force. Everyone clearly felt their spiritual force rapidly being sucked away through the silver thread connection.

By this time, even if some of them felt resentful toward Ye Yin Zhu, they must clearly have trusted him. Below the city walls, the distance between the enemy and the Dragon Cavalry gradually closed. This was their only chance.

Thirty-nine silver threads formed a complicated spiderweb that glistened from every strand. The intensity of each of their spiritual force was completely on display right now. The richer the spiritual force, the more brilliantly beautiful the silver threads twinkled. Conversely, the silvery light would be weak at some parts.

Ye Yin Zhu closed his eyes. At this moment, he no longer needed to look. On his forehead, large beads of sweat trickled down his temples, wetting his bangs. His body trembled slightly, the intensity gradually rising. At this very moment, the pressure he was under was more than that disagreeing Spiritual Mage could comprehend.

This magic had a pleasant name. When it was first created, the Spiritual Magic circles gave it a special title. It was called: Myriad Spirits Confluence.

Theoretically, what Ye Yin Zhu previously said wasn’t wrong. What he didn’t voice was the fact that even though everyone’s spiritual forces were indistinguishable from one another, he had to bear with everyone’s mental state and the pressure of varying spiritual force intensities as his Spiritual Imprint was being used as the medium. Without an unwavering and resolute will to bear this suffering, it was highly likely that the tremendous amount of spiritual force being

absorbed would immediately destroy him and turn him brain-dead.

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu endured this suffering. Within these thirty-nine spiritual forces were different chaotic mindsets that unceasingly attacked his brain. If he hadn't cultivated the Pure Zither Heart since he was a child, if his will and perseverance weren't matchless, his mental defenses would have already been destroyed. While the tremendous volume of spiritual force poured into him, Ye Yin Zhu, by means of his Spiritual Imprint, crazily absorbed these spiritual forces to use for himself.

In the past, he was at Level 1 of the Courageous Zither Heart, and his spiritual force could expand to a range of thirty meters in all directions, thus allowing him to examine even the most minute of magical fluctuations in his surroundings. Right now, his range limit was expanding with astonishing speed. As a result, he essentially no longer needed to visually observe the world; he merely used his spiritual awareness to grasp everyone and everything.

His Pure Zither Heart foundation's most important influence was displayed at this moment. Ye Yin Zhu's zither heart held not even a single trace of impurity, so it was able to ward off all the complex emotions being sent his way. With some struggle, he gradually sat down on the ground, the round, concave mirror of ice behind him.

His previously returned silver space ring flickered with brilliant rays of light, and a zither manifested above his knees.

Stroking the zither body, a familiar feeling arose as his zither heart became more resolute. At this moment, his body emitted a magical radiance that was rapidly changing. The originally faint yellow magic had already become richer and more profound. The strong spiritual power caused Ye Yin Zhu's originally scholarly air to shift, allowing an aura of strength and dignity to surround him. Rays of light shone down on all the mages linked by the silver threads, creating a rippling halo of light effect. As the core, Ye Yin Zhu was currently like the moon that all the stars cup themselves around.¹



Dis and Perkins almost halted their march as their gazes were drawn to the rather short city walls of Konya City. Atop the city walls, Ye Yin Zhu's body

happened to change, strengthening the faint unease within their hearts.



Ye Yin Zhu's guqin was a dark yellow color, the grains of the zither clear and distinctive. An ordinary guqin was crafted following the phoenix model. Its body would correspond with the shape of a phoenix with a discernible head, neck, shoulders, waist, tail, and feet. The zither currently resting on his knees possessed a dragon shape rather than a phoenix shape.

The 'zither head' served as the head of the dragon. Its forehead was embedded with a hardwood port to rack the strings. This was called the 'bridge,' the tallest part of the zither. The bottom of the zither had two sound grooves. The comparatively large one in the middle was called the 'dragon pool,' while the one located at the smaller end of the zither was called the 'phoenix pond.' The separation of the world, located between both the dragon and the phoenix, symbolized every manifestation of the heavens and the earth.

The bridge had a strip of hardwood attached to it called 'chenglu.' Seven 'string holes' were drilled into it for the strings to be threaded through. These seven hole were in order to 'tune' the strings. The base of the zither head also had a 'phoenix tongue' and 'peg protector.' All that was below the waist was naturally called the 'phoenix tail.' The zither tail base had a shallow groove of hardwood called 'dragon gums' for the strings to rest against. The dragon gums were decorated on both sides with an ornament called the 'ceremonial cap,' which was also known as the 'burnt tail.'² The seven strings threaded past the chenglu and through the bridge and dragon gums, curling beneath the zither tail and through a pair of holes called 'goose feet.' This symbolized seven stars. ³

Embedded in the zither were thirteen 'zither crests' that, unexpectedly, were carved from dragon teeth. Not only that, they were carved from the dragon teeth of thirteen different Gigantic Dragons. The seven strings seemed to radiate with a dark light; these strings were the thinnest tendons of seven different Gigantic Dragons. This zither's name was——Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar.

The moment Ye Yin Zhu stroked the strings of the Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither, his body's trembling, which was a result of absorbing too much spiritual force, miraculously vanished.

Sura had returned to Ye Yin Zhu's side without the latter being aware. Fisichella stood nearby as well, his complicated gaze resting on Ye Yin Zhu as he thought, This person is crazy! The beastmen below the city walls didn't seem to enter his mind. What his eyes were reflecting at the moment was the visage of a white-robed, black-haired youth with a zither and scholarly air.

“The inexhaustible winter gale,
Rings with the tinkling sound of jade pendants.
The heavens explode and are torn asunder,
By the roar of the venerable Azure Dragon.” 4

The low recitation escaped Ye Yin Zhu's lips, the amplification spell transmitting the words far and wide. The beastmen didn't react to these four lines, but the Dragon Cavalrymen discovered with amazement that the dragons they were seated on stiffened simultaneously. All of the dragon mounts seemed to have lost their breath in a split second.

Chapter 33 – Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar << Soaring Dragon's Cry >> (II)

Ye Yin Zhu's eight fingers moved at the same time. A clear, chilling, bloodthirsty brimming zither melody gracefully emerged from his fingertips. Every simple note now resembled the downcast sobbing of a dragon, touching the soul with its sorrow that spread far and wide to affect everyone present.

Focusing the spiritual forces of forty mages, a qualitative change finally happened at this exact moment. The deep yellow radiance disappeared and was replaced with a layer of faint violet light. Unfortunately, because the mages beside Ye Yin Zhu were releasing their spiritual forces in vast quantities, they were currently unable to sense the change in Ye Yin Zhu. If not, they would certainly be astounded to see a miraculous ascension from Yellow Rank to Violet Rank.

That was right! Violet Rank, which was the most powerful rank on the continent.

Ye Yin Zhu suddenly opened his eyes, an electrifying, deep violet light shooting

outward from his two black eyes. At this moment, however, his eyes were no longer clear and graceful; in fact, within his irises, only a chilling, lethal light remained.

Sura was frightened.

Fisichella was frightened.

They were both frightened because of the incomparably vast desire to murder emitting from Ye Yin Zhu's body.

The Zither Sect cultivated the zither; the system was divided into three major ranks with twenty-seven levels, the latter part matching the Rainbow Ranking System's twenty-seven levels. Upon entering the Violet Rank, there wouldn't be a disparity in magical strength between the Zither Sect and Rainbow Ranking System. To Ye Yin Zhu, these three major ranks were divided into the Pure Zither Heart, Courageous Zither Heart, and Profound Violet Zither Heart. At this moment, he was focusing the spiritual forces of forty mages which initialized a fundamental change within himself. He transcended past the Courageous Zither Heart and directly into the Profound Violet Zither Heart Realm. The Profound Violet Zither Heart also had another name, which was—Zither Heart of Slaughter.

Atop the city walls, if any of them were clear-headed, they would, without exception, be stupefied by the scene happening before them. A ring of violet light surrounded Ye Yin Zhu. In this moment, he seemed to have become the center of the entire world.

The beastmen forgot to attack.

The Dragon Cavalry Knights felt panicked.

At this moment, listening to that gradually quickening, gradually chilling and bloodthirsty zither music, both sides seemed to forget about the enemy opposite them.

Perkins sucked in a breath of cool air. "Violet Rank Great Magister, the peak of strength amongst the humans."

Dis bellowed, "What are we waiting for? Get me to the top. Don't tell me we're waiting for him to finish his magic spell before we attack?" At his bellow, the

beastmen legion finally began to move. But except for the Behemoths, the Apemen, Tigermen, and Leopardmen's speed had clearly slowed down significantly. This was because they could feel the dense pressure within the air, one that came from the powerful pressure of dragons.

At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu's mind could not fully control his magic. The ascension to the Profound Zither Heart Realm had actually destabilized his control. His dark eyes flickered with a tremendous desire to slaughter the heavens and earth. The eight fingers that moved across the Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither transformed into a phantom.

Within the zither music, the clear and chilling tones completely disappeared. All that remained was the bloodthirst.

Fisichella glanced at Ye Yin Zhu and, with difficulty, suppressed the fear in his heart. Concentrating all of his dou qi, he nearly shouted himself hoarse. "Milan soldiers! Abandon the dragons and retreat!" Yelling this line was precisely the task Ye Yin Zhu had assigned him.

When they heard his first shout, the Dragon Cavalry woke from the stupor the zither music had placed them in. When he shouted the second command, everyone was able to clearly hear it. At this moment, as the strongest amongst the human species, the Dragon Cavalry Knights could feel a tremendous change occurring within their dragon mounts. The dragons' bodies unexpectedly expanded. That was right; they expanded. The dragons regained their breaths, but their breathing became several times heavier than normal. Their low roars resembled the rumble that preceded an approaching rainstorm.

The beastmen army were already dashing forward, and the three beastmen races, in a pair of wing formations, pincer attacked the Dragon Cavalry. The Behemoths advanced with heavy steps, the rumbling resembling a meat grinder. Oliveira could already see the intense, bloodthirsty light within the Gold Behemoths' eyes.

Abandon the dragons? And then, without a moment to spare, renounce any resistance? The beastmen had already arrived!

At this moment, Oliveira's potential to become a famous general in the future emerged. With a clear head, he connected Ye Yin Zhu's final warning before he

left with the current situation and reacted quickly. He shouted, “Dragon Cavalry, listen to the command! Abandon the Gigantic Dragons. Retreat!” Grasping the dragonspear in hand, he immediately dismounted his Gigantic Dragon.

Regardless of the Dragon Cavalry Knights’ hesitation at the prince’s order, they wouldn’t dare disobey their commander. This was the Dragon Cavalry Creed. With the inclusion of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts students, the five hundred and sixty strong Dragon Cavalry quickly dismounted their dragons and retreated in the direction of Konya City. This order felt strange to them. Their Gigantic Dragons unexpectedly stood motionless, not moving even a fraction.

The Leopardmen’s weapons were their sharp claws and rapid speed. Apart from the Apemen’s navigation skills, their weapons were enormous wolf tooth clubs. The strong Tigermen used excessively heavy hammers. At the same time that the Dragon Cavalry Knights pulled back, with the dragons still arranged in a horizontal line formation, the beastmen had already made contact.

Hong——

A Tigerman swung his heavy hammer, smashing it heavily against an Earthbound Swift Dragon’s back. At first glance, a Tigerman wouldn’t suffer any losses from confronting an Earthbound Swift Dragon. But something happened that shocked the beastmen. The head of the Earthbound Swift Dragon bore the heavy hammer’s smash, and to that unexpected and unimaginable attack, the dragon’s weaker body actually didn’t move a single bit. Its dragon head merely turned toward that Tigermen.

The Tigerman stared back, looking into a pair of bloodshot dragon eyes. That bloody red color held a trace of black within it. This was the first time the tigerman felt this, and also the final time he would feel this in his entire life. Because in the next moment, his strong body was already torn to shreds by this Earthbound Swift Dragon.

The tamed dragons went insane. Five hundred and sixty tamed dragons of the Dragon Cavalry went mad at the same time. The beastmen who were dashing closer didn’t know when, but all of the tamed dragons’ eyes had become bloodshot. In a flash, the tamed dragons broke out and charged wildly into the

beastmen in front of them.

As the most powerful beastmen army division, the Tigermen could completely contend against tamed dragons. But at this moment, in front of these tamed dragons, they were as weak as paper paste. They actually confronted the tamed dragons, but regardless if whether it were an Earthbound Swift Dragon or Maginot Iron Dragon, the moment the dragons went berserk, their attack, defense, and speed tripled at the very least. The dragons went completely berserk and charged into the horde of beastmen.

Originally, the beastmen should have been able to unilaterally slaughter the dragons. Who would have thought a complete reversal would occur when the knights dismounted from their dragons. The five hundred and sixty berserk tamed dragons resembled five hundred and sixty of the sharpest daggers to exist, ruthlessly tearing apart the beastmen plundering legion inside out.

The bloodthirsty zither music still resounded throughout Brenner Pass. That violet light emitting from Ye Yin Zhu's body was a chilling brilliance, a result of Level 1 of the Profound Violet Zither Heart. On the battlefield, the wind dripped with bloody mists, as if it were accompanying the zither melody.

<< Soaring Dragon's Cry >> was one of the great nine famous songs of the Zither Sect, the effect: Exploding Dragons.

This song, << Soaring Dragon's Cry >>, had another name. It was also known as the Dragon Extinction Melody. Only with the Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither could this song's might be truly brought out. Level 1 Violet Rank of << Soaring Dragon's Cry >> could affect any creature with dragon blood of rank 8 or below. Who would have thought that Ye Yin Zhu's long preparations was for this zither song that, rather than targeting the enemy, targeted his own side?



Dis was rushing forth and only sent a Maginot Iron Dragon flying explosively. The sudden change had caught him and Perkins unprepared. As a rank 9 magical beast, their attacks on a Maginot Iron Dragon's defense should originally be like smashing apart soft tofu—their own attacks completely useless against him. Now his violent fist could only send a Maginot Iron Dragon flying explosively instead of killing it explosively. While the Behemoths were shocked, the five

hundred and sixty tamed dragons were already tearing apart the beastmen army.

“Crazy, these bastards are crazy. I’ll kill them,” Dis angrily thundered, using this roar to gloss over his current panic. This was the first time he had come across such a change in the tamed dragons in all his years at war. Were these still tamed dragons? This increase in firepower, in the blink of an eye... these tamed dragons could even match up against a Genuine Gigantic Dragon.

Hong——

An explosion made the earth and beastmen plundering legion suddenly shake at the same time. The violent explosion was the result of an Earthbound Swift Dragon’s body suddenly detonating. Its blood became bloody arrows, its scales and bones shattering to pieces instantly and becoming frighteningly lethal weapons. With the head of this Earthbound Swift Dragon as the explosion’s epicenter, all of the beastmen in a range of thirty meters were unable to withstand it and were being run through by a dragon horn or dragon bones. Struck down, the beastmen’s corpses slowly fell to the ground one by one, causing the battlefield to appear to have a circle of open space on it.

The head of this Earthbound Swift Dragon exploded and commenced the start of a massacre. That bloodthirsty zither melody, which seemed like hell itself, was accompanied by roaring explosions, the tamed dragon’s detonating body signaling a surging bloody light that appeared within the beastmen plundering legion like a scythe. Apart from the Behemoths, the remaining three great beastmen corps’ numbers were steadily cut down.

A Maginot Iron Dragon’s explosion’s destructive power was greater than an Earthbound Swift Dragon’s as they wore heavier armor. The moment they exploded, that armor accompanied the huge body and became a terrifyingly lethal weapon as well. Not to mention the Apemen, Tigermen, and Leopardmen, even the Berserk Behemoths that came across an exploding Maginot Iron Dragon would be sent flying away by the bombardment, riddled with cuts.

“Not good, it’s waves of iron shrapnel,” Perkins snarled crazily. A succession of several exploding tamed dragon heads had him command the Behemoths to no longer save the other three beastmen forces nearby and to completely focus on

gathering together. Relying on their incomparably strong defense, they huddled together like tortoises. The nearby Berserk Behemoths' rampage changed in a flash, allowing them to withstand the frightening destructive power of the tamed dragons' explosion.

<< Soaring Dragon's Cry >>

This was the Dragon Extinction Melody. Relying on the Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither to play it, the song resonated with the souls of the tamed dragons. Like the most frightening stimulant ever, it caused the dragon's blood and life force to immediately flare up and combust. Based on the different dragons' strengths, the duration of the zither song's influence was also different. But as long as they were affected by the zither song, the final outcome would always be an exploding dragon.

Five hundred and sixty tamed dragon heads exploded. These five hundred and sixty violent explosions struck Brenner Pass like an earthquake. The tamed dragons of the Dragon Cavalry had not a single one with strength exceeding rank 6. Under the influence of the << Soaring Dragon's Cry >>, which echoed by means of the Sound Magnification spell and was Violet Rank in strength, the tamed dragons were unable to escape.

Chapter 33 – Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar << Soaring Dragon's Cry >> (III)

At this very moment, it had already become an ocean of blood in front of Konya City's walls. It had become an underworld of blood. Tens of thousands of lives had disappeared in an instant. Below the walls, the Dragon Cavalry Knights were frightened and dumbstruck by this bloody scene before their eyes. Several of them were even unable to prevent their bodies from quaking in fear.

Atop the city walls, because the mages' spiritual force was being drained dry, they had already lost awareness. The last vestiges of their spiritual forces were still being sent to Ye Yin Zhu's Spiritual Imprint through the silver threads. As for the original five hundred defenders of Konya City, they had long since been shocked into unconsciousness by Ye Yin Zhu's Profound Violet Zither Heart. Even if << Soaring Dragon's Cry >> only influenced the dragon race, the tremendous spiritual force was intimidating; how could these commoners possibly resist it?

Those amongst the three beastmen races that had survived the exploding dragons numbered less than a third of the original force. Those that still had the capability to fight was even lower, less than ten percent.

The Behemoth Legion's strength emerged once again. As the powerfully crazy bombardment of exploding dragons came to an end, apart from several light wounds appearing on the Berserk Behemoths, they hadn't received any fatal injuries. Still, the ten or so Behemoths furthest from the circle bore the barrage of the extremely violent draconic explosions and had already lost the ability to fight.

Oliveira's pale face watched this scene happening before him and murmured to himself, "Ye Yin Zhu, you are a bit too fierce. Those were five hundred and sixty tamed dragons!" Now he finally understood why Ye Yin Zhu had asked him about the cost of victory before he left the city walls for the frontlines and about which strategy to use.

The Dragon Cavalry Knights held their dragonspears, their eyes brimming with tears as they stared at the bloody battlefield. As a Dragon Cavalry Knight, they had a profound bond with their dragon mount, but now, their tamed dragons didn't even have complete skeletons left for them to bury. In their eyes, that originally white-clothed, black-haired, simple and youthful mage seemed to have become the devil incarnate.

Outside of Konya City, the battlefield's thick stench of blood resembled hell. Destroyed limbs, shattered arms, blood streaming out of internal organs... the chilly northern wind whistled, carrying this bloody mist around Brenner Pass.

Even if the exploding dragons didn't kill all the beastmen warriors of those three races, at this moment, they had already lost all their courage and fighting spirit. Some beastmen just sat paralyzed on the ground, violently gasping for breath. Others were near-crazily rushing back to the nearby mountains, and there were even others who forgot that the enemy was in front of them, running directly toward the Dragon Cavalry and piercing themselves on the heavy dragonspears.

Forty thousand troops! That was forty thousand troops! Although they weren't completely wiped out, after the draconic explosions, they had

completely lost their ability to fight. Even the last vestige of fighting spirit was obliterated completely by this hellish scene before them.

The Behemoths straightened their bodies, the shock in their hearts gradually replaced by extreme anger. Their bloodthirsty, bitter, and resentful gazes were cast toward the top of Konya City.

Suddenly, loud and clear dragon cries could be heard from the distance. In the distance, black clouds trailed through the air, heading toward Konya City. At the very front was a huge, earthen-yellow Gigantic Dragon.

Following this huge, earthen-yellow Gigantic Dragon were creatures with a dragon head and falcon body, a height of approximately four meters, and a wingspan of five meters. They had a keen gaze, wings that flickered with the metallic luster of blades, and sharp claws coming from their stomach that amply illustrated their powerful destructive power.

“That’s second elder brother leading Falcon Dragons over here,” Oliveira shouted, pleasantly surprised. His heart immediately sunk, however, because he realised that Ye Yin Zhu’s song, << Soaring Dragon’s Cry >>, was far from over.



Maldini had received the magical summons from Konya City while warding off an especially fierce attack on Sacred Heart City. With this sort of situation, even if he knew that Konya City was essentially defenseless, even if he knew that his grandson would probably die at the hands of the beastmen, he couldn’t immediately rush over upon reading the missive. After all, according to the numbers, even if he were to immediately dispatch the fastest Earthbound Swift Dragons to rush to the rescue, it would already be too late. Not to mention, the beastmen’s plundering legion composition was very strong.

When Oliveira’s second summon reached him, however, Maldini panicked. Regardless of if he would lose his grandson, the Imperial Crown Prince was unexpectedly at Konya City. Naturally, he couldn’t not act! Emperor Silvo only had two children, and these two children were currently in danger at the doomed Konya City. If something dangerous happened to them, then there would be no way for him to take responsibility. Thus, he had immediately transferred, by force, five hundred Falcon Dragons from his legion. Placing his

second eldest grandson, Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander Okafur, in charge, he sent the reinforcements to Konya City with haste.

Regardless of whether it were Milan Empire's Dragon Cavalry Legion or Blue Dias' Dragon Cavalry Legion, both had extraordinary Dragon Cavalry weapons. Of the Milan Empire's tamed dragon species, its greatest pride was its Falcon Dragon Regiment.

The Falcon Dragon Regiment consisted of five hundred troops. On Longinus Continent, this was the only flying tamed dragon army. Its fighting strength was exceedingly high as they were rank 5 magical beasts. Possessing the greatest flexibility of the entire army, they had contributed a myriad of achievements in past wars for the Milan Empire. Even if they faced the Behemoths, by relying on their flexibility, the Dragon Cavalry Knight could work in concert with their dragon mount, allowing the pair to tangle with the barbarians. The requirements to be a Falcon Dragon Cavalry Knight was thus much higher than an ordinary Dragon Cavalry Knight. They must be Intermediate Level Yellow Rank or higher. In addition, they had to pass all kinds of assessments before they could join the ranks.

Of course, Maldini held no hope that the Falcon Dragons could possibly defeat the beastmen plundering legion. It simply wasn't realistic. The only mission he gave Okafur was to rescue the prince and princess hidden among the hundred Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts students. As for Konya City, he could do nothing but give it up for the time being and wait for internal reinforcements to arrive later before thinking of a means to deal with the issue.

Traveling five hundred kilometers, Okafur's Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon had led the Falcon Dragons, taking an hour to hastily arrive. In the distance, they could hear bursts of thunder-like booms. Okafur was baffled as to why the Falcon Dragon Regiment he was leading had begun to stir restlessly, agitated, when they flew above the plains near Konya City.

With Indigo Rank strength, Okafur's eyesight was very good. From this distance, he could see a wide expanse of land shrouded with a bright red fog. That somewhat ear-piercing, brimming with bloodthirst zither melody wasn't aimed toward his direction at all, so in the sky, he and the Falcon Dragon corps could only hear a haunting tune.

The Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon restlessly roared and struggled to fly away from this area. Internally, Okafur was greatly alarmed. He and this Gigantic Dragon had signed a contract. This was the very first time it wanted to go against his command.

“Rhubarb, what’s going on with you?” Okafur asked in shock.

At this time, in Konya City, Oliveira had already used the loudest volume he could to yell, “Second Elder Brother, quickly leave this place! No matter what, do not land here!”

The explosive tragedy of five hundred and sixty tamed dragons had already made Oliveira clearly understand a lot of things. Although he wasn’t certain of the effects of Ye Yin Zhu’s zither song, when all was said and done, he was certain that it had done something to the dragons. With the effects of Voice Magnification and the gigantic mirror of ice, the zither music had concentrated to the area in front of Konya City. Oliveira suddenly realized that if the Falcon Dragons Okafur was leading were to land, wouldn’t they also be affected by the zither song?



The violet radiance surrounding Ye Yin Zhu’s body had already reached the highest level of power it could, unexpectedly reaching Profound Violet Zither Heart Level 2. As they had sent their spiritual forces to Ye Yin Zhu through the silver threads, the overall consumption was too great, so everyone had now fallen unconscious. Ye Yin Zhu’s << Soaring Dragon’s Cry >> was also releasing its last peak surge of spiritual force influence.

The Voice Magnification spell’s effectiveness upon being activated by the Spatial silver crystal formation was indeed great, but Xiang Luan had never thought that she would fear the Voice Magnification being too effective. At this moment, << Soaring Dragon’s Cry >>’s influence had already filled the sky.

Oliveira’s strength was currently at Primary Level Cyan Rank, and he had used a vocal-oriented technique to transmit his voice upwards into the sky, causing Okafur to hear it the next moment. Although he didn’t know why he was told this, he unquestionably believed his younger brother wouldn’t deceive him. He immediately prepared to lead the Falcon Dragon Cavalry Knights to withdraw for

the time being, but the warriors on the backs of the Falcon Dragons were aghast to discover that they could no longer control their Falcon Dragons. The dragons' breathing had become heavier, rougher, and the flapping of their wings slower, more sluggish.

“Not good,” Okafur bellowed. His Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon, Rhubarb, had already reached rank 8. Because the zither music was too scattered, his dragon had yet to receive its deadly influence. As a Sentient Magical Beast, it had felt the intense crisis and forced Okafur to fly off in another direction.

The first Falcon Dragon began to fall, its huge body, in correspondence to the earth's gravity, along with the added weight of the tall knight on it, descended to the earth like a meteor overtaking the moon.

As if it had smelled a foul stench, the Falcon Dragons went berserk, its gaze resting upon the tall Behemoths. Dragons and Behemoths were natural enemies, and it used the last iota of sentience to spread its wings and adjust its flight angle, powerfully rushing straight toward the Behemoths.

The Behemoths were still concentrated together, as it had been the best way to defend against the prior explosions from the tamed dragons. Now, they became the clearest target on the plains. The Falcon Dragon dropped toward that target.

As the first fell, the second followed. Like meteorites falling down from the sky, the five hundred Falcon Dragons became extremely terrifying bombs which the Behemoths were unable to endure. Numerous five hundred kilogram weights fell from an altitude of a kilometer, and with the explosive force from the draconic explosions propelling them even faster towards the ground, how terrifying would this scene be?

Chapter 34 – Hero or Villain? (I)

Hong hong hong hong hong hong hong hong

Perkins and Dis were in the center of the Behemoth group, so they had no chance to dodge. The Falcon Dragon and its Dragon Cavalry Knight were already heading towards them like a meteor.

Five hundred Falcon Dragons and five hundred Yellow Rank or higher Dragon Cavalry Knights... more than half had speedily dived down, targeting the collection of Behemoths.

This was a completely devastating attack. At this moment, the Behemoths finally demonstrated their greatest strength. Golden Dynamite Dis looked up at the sky and the striking Falcon Dragons. He immediately straightened his body, arms spread out with an armspan of close to fifteen meters in length. His sharp claws, originally withdrawn, sliced out.

Soon, a Falcon Dragon crazily dive-bombed. Dis used his two-and-a-half-meter-long claw to tear it in two horizontally. In but a moment, the Falcon Dragon’s body and the attached Dragon Cavalry Knight were torn to shreds.

Perkins snarled, “Attack the sky! Behemoths, go crazy.” Without any rest, the Behemoths, one after another, went berserk. Originally, their bodies could already be compared to mountains. After going berserk, their entire bodies obtained flesh as hard as granite upon transformation. In a flash, their offensive and defensive might soared past their natural limits.

With all of them under the berserk transformation, eighty six Behemoths suddenly slashed their two-and-a-half-meter-long claws towards the sky. Those wounded Berserk Behemoths had completely forgotten their injured state, instead revealing an unfathomable level of strength.

Soon, the Falcon Dragons dropped. But by using their most direct and also most powerful attack, they had crazily ignited their blood and forged onward with this unfathomably suicidal attack.

Only a few of the Falcon Dragons dive-bombed the other three beastmen races

within the gathering. Compared to the previous tamed dragons that had exploded while on land, the Falcon Dragons had fallen to the ground before immediately exploding, creating an even larger impact. Within the range of a hundred meters, flesh and blood flew everywhere. The shards of the Dragon Cavalry Knight's equipment and the body parts of the Falcon Dragon itself were included in the debris, increasing the lethality of this slaughter.

Ultimately, the three beastmen warrior races received fatal wounds again and again. At this moment, even the phrase 'utterly defeated' couldn't be used to describe them. Only those with incomparably strong arms could protect the beastmen, but the Behemoths weren't brandishing their two-and-a-half-meter-long-claws for the beastmen warrior races.

As the most powerful of the Behemoths, Dis and Perkins bore the brunt of the attack. Even if they didn't really care about the other beastmen races dying, they did care about their own race. After all, the number of Behemoths were truly too sparse due to the fact that their natural might could match a Genuine Dragon in strength!

Whenever a Berserk Behemoth couldn't resist the bombardment, Dis and Perkins would both immediately pull back the Berserk Behemoth and take on the impact of the sky attacks themselves. In regards to the greatest harm that befell the Behemoths, it would be the split second when the Falcon Dragons fell and detonated. That tremendous concussive force was extremely difficult for the Behemoths to deal with. Even though Gold Behemoths Dis and Perkins bore a great deal of the Falcon Dragons' bombardment, they too felt their arms ache and numb. All the sharp claws on their huge hands had shattered.

In the wake of the extremely ear-piercing cries that resembled silk tearing, << Soaring Dragon's Cry >> finally concluded. The seven strings of the Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither had all snapped cleanly, and the silver threads that were linked to Ye Yin Zhu's Spiritual Imprint faded away in an instant. Each and every one of the mages had fallen softly to the ground, unconscious.

In the wake of the faint violet light waning, the tyrannical and bloodthirsty aura around Ye Yin Zhu also disappeared accordingly. At this very moment, his body began to quiver.

This was a slaughter! A genuine slaughter. Moreover, the ones he directly killed were not just those of the enemy; it was also the warriors of his own side. They were the most elite troops and also the most precious dragon warriors. Altogether, with the addition of five hundred Falcon Dragon Cavalry Knights, a thousand and sixty tamed dragons had perished in the midst of the song, << Soaring Dragon's Cry >>.

Who said that a Divine Music mage was a trash mage? Even if a famous, true Violet Rank Great Magister was here, he also would absolutely be unable to withstand the eighty Behemoths of the plundering legion. Ye Yin Zhu had, however, achieved this. Although the sacrifice was immense, he had achieved this in the end.



Behemoths. A head fell down beside Perkins and Dis. They hadn't died; with their durable defense, although their lives had been spared, they weren't left unharmed. Their entire body suffered from serious damage and were completely splattered red with the blood of the self-detonating Earth Dragons and Falcon Dragons. Yet, their wounds weren't impossible to recover from with a long rest.

At this moment, the two Gold Behemoths were not only angry, their moods even began to have traces of panic after the deaths of a few Behemoths. Although they had done their best to fight back and save the lives of their fellow Behemoths, including the four Silver Behemoths, all eighty-four Behemoths had completely lost their ability to fight. Even if they were confident in themselves, they knew it was impossible to carry away all of their clansmen. Besides, until now, they hadn't even genuinely engaged in battle. They didn't know what kind of attack the Milanese would throw at them next.

In their panic-stricken mindsets, the two Gold Behemoths shot gazes toward the top of Konya City's walls at the same time. They both realized that the frightening scene just now was completely orchestrated by that white-robed, black-haired mage. That Great Magister level of spiritual power and bloodthirsty zither music was the main cause of their complete wipeout.

And at this moment, Ye Yin Zhu found himself in the greatest crisis since he began cultivating the zither. Including himself, forty mages' spiritual forces were

nearly completely exhausted. Those numerous and disorderly mindsets had taken advantage of the void in power and invaded Ye Yin Zhu's brain, giving him the feeling that something was exploding. He was unable to pay attention to the outside world as he hovered between life and death, tormented with the pain of being torn apart. Even with his unwavering will, he couldn't help but howl in pain at this moment. His entire body spasmed violently. Large beads of sweat flowed down his forehead. His previously scholarly air was obliterated completely.

Sura and Fisichella had long since been stunned by everything that had happened outside of the city until Ye Yin Zhu had suddenly broken out in extreme pain, his screams causing the both of them to react. Sura immediately threw himself at Ye Yin Zhu, but before her body neared his, Ye Yin Zhu suddenly broke out with a tyrannical dou qi that immediately sent her body flying. Fisichella's situation was much better than Sura's. Although he wore heavy armor, Sura had used dou qi to propel himself forward. When Ye Yin Zhu's body released Yellow Bamboo Dou Qi, it had sent Sura crashing violently into the city battlement, Ye Yin Zhu's body beginning to shake fitfully afterwards.

<< Soaring Dragon's Cry >> had given him results several times more frightening than what Ye Yin Zhu could have imagined, but at the same time, the side effects for using shared spiritual force magic was also immensely greater than he had imagined. How could spiritual force be unceasingly borrowed? This shared spiritual force magic, generally speaking, could, at most, allow two other mages to share spiritual forces with the user if they had similar magic. Yet, he had borrowed thirty-nine spiritual forces. This complicated spiritual force was comprised of complex mindsets, the magnitude of which was hard to imagine.

With the earlier presence of such tremendous spiritual force, Ye Yin Zhu was still barely able to suppress those clamorous mental states. When his song << Soaring Dragon's Cry >> finished, a substantial amount of that tremendous spiritual force was exhausted, leaving him with no strength to protect himself. In that moment, his mental defenses fell immediately, and the Spiritual Imprint hovering above his head trembled violently as the originally clear, silvery star began to grow more and more illusory. It seemed to be on the verge of shattering at any moment.

At this time, Ye Yin Zhu felt that his mind on the verge of collapse, as he was no

longer able to suppress the constantly messy, incomparably tremendous mindsets. Suddenly, a heart-shaped silvery light released from Ye Yin Zhu's chest. The silvery light wasn't strong at all, but it appeared to be made of a profoundly pure essence. In a flash, the heart-shaped silvery light transformed and rose, shooting straight into the Spiritual Imprint above Ye Yin Zhu's head. In the blink of an eye, the two fused together.

Ye Yin Zhu only felt a warm energy appear on his forehead. Similar to a tremendous abyss, it unceasingly devoured those numerous and disorderly energies. The effect was instant. His mind, previously on the verge of collapse, became stable once more. Those thirty-nine chaotic minds that had brought him anguish were also being gradually devoured, growing increasingly weaker. His crisis had been suppressed at last.◦

What had saved Ye Yin Zhu was the item Dean Nina of the Divine Music division had gifted him some time ago: the Pure Brightness Spirit Guardian of the three Divine Protections. The Pure Brightness Spirit Guardian, which had originally appeared useless, became Ye Yin Zhu's life-saving talisman at this moment. By means of this special spiritual fluctuation, it had forced the chaotic minds out of Ye Yin Zhu's own. At the same time, it also stabilized his Spiritual Imprint.

With the aid of the Pure Brightness Spirit Guardian, Ye Yin Zhu gradually withdrew his recovering Spiritual Imprint.



Meanwhile, on the battlefield, the barely surviving Gold Behemoths of the beastmen plundering legion walked forward violently. Since their births, Dis and Perkins had never tasted such a massive defeat. Not only had the army under their command been completely wiped out, their clansmen had suffered severe wounds. Under this intense provocation, as they were Gold Behemoths, their berserk natures completely flared up. They could not longer think of any of the consequences.

At this very moment, the two Gold Behemoths' large, ominous eyes fell upon the weakened Ye Yin Zhu atop Konya City's walls. They thoroughly understood that this young mage appeared to be the one responsible for completely wiping

out the plundering legion.

Dis looked up to the sky and roared. Even after using up a great deal of his physical power in succession, his entire body still exploded out with a blaze-like golden light. His left foot stepped forward, his entire body leaping forward a hundred meters. Bypassing his seriously injured comrades, he landed, his gigantic foot unexpectedly sinking deep into the ground. The golden light emitted from his body was instantly focused around his right fist. Like an incomparably durable, gigantic golden hammer, he violently struck the ground.

This time, it wasn't a nondiscriminatory attack nor was it a dou qi enhanced remote attack. It was simply pure power. Just like Gold Behemoth Dis' title of Golden Dynamite, he used his formidable power in an extremely special manner.

At the same time that Dis explosively struck with his fist, Perkins sprinted forward from behind. His huge body unexpectedly soared upward, his left foot landing heavily on Dis' expansive, vallation-like back. His entire body used the rebound power to shoot towards the top of Konya City's walls. He appeared like a golden sun. One should know that Konya City's walls weren't even as tall as a Gold Behemoth!

Chapter 34 – Hero or Villain? (II)

The two Gold Behemoths violently strode forth with a single goal in mind: Exterminate the one that had dealt them such a catastrophic attack—Ye Yin Zhu.

Hong——

It seemed like the entirety of Brenner Pass was violently shaking, the earth trembling fiercely. The ground in front of Dis curved upward with his strike before completely exploding. Regardless of whether the ground consisted of soil or rock, his berserk power sent them all flying away.

This powerful, explosive force advanced with astonishing speed in the direction of Konya City. As the immense, arched shock wave mixed with a generous amount of soil and rock, it made the ground before Konya City appear as if a plow had gone through it. This tremendous force was extremely terrifying.

Roar— —

In the air, the rank 8 Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon, Rhubarb, issued a deep roar. The frightful feeling created by the << Soaring Dragon's Cry >> zither song had already disappeared completely. At Okafur's urging, it rushed toward the ground in a flash.

As an Indigo Rank War Master and as a Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander with a rank 8 Gigantic Dragon, Okafur currently had two options. The first option was to intercept Perkins, who was rushing through the air toward the top of the city walls. The second option was to block the Gold Behemoth's hellish shock wave that was heading toward the five hundred Dragon Cavalry Knights who were deprived of their Gigantic Dragons as well as Konya City's walls.

It was unknown whether the complete loss of five hundred Falcon Dragons had made him forget that the Princess and Prince were still atop the city walls or the fact that it was his younger brother Oliveira who was in danger right before his eyes, but Okafur unexpectedly didn't choose to intercept Perkins. He had instead urged his Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon to rush toward the ground.

The abilities of a Sentient Magical Beast was not subjected to the restrictions of the Rainbow Ranking System; instead, their abilities were based on special properties. The enormous body of the Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon roared deeply before suddenly exploding with a massive yellow radiance that scattered across the ground. A ten-meter-tall, three-meter-thick solid wall of earth was raised in front of the long-stunned five hundred Dragon Cavalry Knights, countering the hellish shock wave just in time.

Who would be victorious in a collision between a Gold Behemoth's absolute might and an Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon's Earth Magic? If the Gold Behemoth was at his peak state, then it would have been impossible for the Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon to be its match.

Unfortunately, Dis had just previously faced two phases of draconic explosions with very powerful destructive power. Every one of the two-and-a-half-meter-long sharp claws on Dis' hands had already been shattered, and a substantial amount of his physical strength had also been used up. Although it had been a fury-induced attack, when the hellish shock wave collided with the Earth Wall,

his absolute might was unable to break through.

An arc-shaped burst of dusty smoke exploded before Konya City, rising straight into the sky. Every Dragon Cavalry Knight now had a head and face filthy with grime. Those lacking in strength fell back because of the aftershock.

The hellish shock wave had been obstructed in the end.

During Rhubarb's full-out downward rush, Okafur's seven meter-long earth-yellow dragonspear pointed at Gold Behemoth Dis.



While Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander Okafur charged at Gold Behemoth Dis, Gold Behemoth Perkins was already about to land on Konya City's walls. Currently, only two people were completely clear-headed on Konya City's city walls—Sura and the Milan Imperial Prince, Fisichella.

When he saw that incomparably gigantic gold-colored figure leap forward, Fisichella revealed the entirety of his capabilities as the Imperial Prince. With the aura of the one who was first-in-line to inherit the throne, his signature laughing smile was long gone as he took a step forward. He used his tall body to block Ye Yin Zhu and Sura, his hands gripped around the handle of his thick and broad heavy sword. With an explosive shout, green dou qi was directly chopped at Perkins.

Clang. A deafening metallic ring reverberated outward. The thick and broad heavy sword that was chopping at Perkins's huge body had unexpectedly burst forth with a fiery spark. The golden hair defense of a Gold Behemoth's body was extremely and truly frightening. Green Rank dou qi to a rank 9 magical beast—it simply wasn't any different from a troublesome itch. Perkin's body didn't even shake in the slightest. Fisichella, on the other hand, had already been sent flying back from the shock of the blow, crashing against Konya City's low wall before falling back inside the city.

Perkins didn't know Fisichella's identity. If it were otherwise, then he might have changed the target of his attack. At this moment, his vicious, blood-red eyes were focused only on that white-robed mage who was gradually freeing himself from his pain with the assistance of the Pure Brightness Spirit Guardian—Ye Yin Zhu.

Roar——

With a cyclone-like roar, Perkins' huge right fist attacked Ye Yin Zhu.

In the blink of an eye, with speed like lightning, Sura's figure moved to stand in front of Ye Yin Zhu's body. The Eternal Substitute Puppet had long since been activated. His immunity to physical attacks made Perkin's tyrannical right fist phase through Sura's body. Sura's foot used the fist as leverage and, in a flash, arrived before Perkins. His black Angel's Sigh stabbed at Perkin's eyes, moving like two streaks of black lightning.

Sura was well aware of the crisis she found herself in. She knew that even if Angel's Sigh was almost as powerful as a Divine device, it was still unable to break a Gold Behemoth's defense. Her dou qi was only Green Rank. By attacking Perkin's eyes, perhaps she would be able to change his target from Ye Yin Zhu to her.

Unfortunately, Sura still underestimated the Gold Behemoth's hatred toward Ye Yin Zhu. Perkins actually relied on his tyrannical body and didn't bother to dodge at all. The moment Angel's Sigh stabbed at his eyes, he abruptly shut them, his right fist hadn't halting at all as it attacked Ye Yin Zhu.

Dang—dang—

Two clear and loud sounds resonated. Sura had finally experienced a Gold Behemoth's incomparable and tyrannical defense. Even the eyelids were actually able to block his green-dou-qi-laced Angel's Sigh. The tremendous backlash had even sent Sura's physical attack immune body flying into the distance. As his body soared through the air, a piercing cry tore from Sura's mouth. His body crashed into the city, and he could only watch as Perkins used the ample space to strike at Ye Yin Zhu's body with his huge right fist .

Hong——

Bizarre rays of light shone brightly from Ye Yin Zhu's wrist. At this crucial moment, the absolute defense of the Life Guardian Bracelet suddenly broke out and blocked Perkins' powerful attack, saving Ye Yin Zhu from the verge of death.

Ye Yin Zhu's Spiritual Imprint had just returned to his body and was rapidly recovering. His body suddenly began to tremble violently. Perkin's powerful

strike had missed his body and struck beside him. His chaotic mind immediately sank into a coma. At this moment, his body was at its weakest. The Divine Celestial Protection's innate defense was disabled, unable to unconditionally block the Gold Behemoth, and the Life Guardian Bracelet's absolute defense was also used up.

Perkins bellowed in anguish. He swung his incomparably strong arms and devastated the top of the city walls. Sura's two slashes hadn't been completely ineffective. Angel's Sigh's effect of increasing attack power against magical defense by 200%, along with its curse ability, caused Perkin's relatively weak eyelids to just narrowly be able to defend against it. His eyes had still received a light wound, causing him to temporarily lose his vision. He also didn't know whether Ye Yin Zhu perished or not. Within his violent rage, he just wanted to quickly destroy everything before his eyes.

Konya City's walls suffered an infernal baptism. Perkins only needed to casually wave his fists, and the city wall would already have gaping holes in them. The extent of a Behemoth's destructive power could clearly be seen. Ye Yin Zhu's side was incredibly lucky to have warded off the Behemoth plundering legion troops earlier.

Once again striking a fist out, the pain and numbness that were afflicting Perkins' eyes gradually faded away. His vision healed rapidly, and with a slight haze covering his sight, he saw that Ye Yin Zhu's figure was seemingly at the edge of a section of the city wall he had destroyed. Half of Ye Yin Zhu's body hung in the air, dangling at the edge of a gaping hole.

"Drop dead!" Like a heavy hammer, his fist made a beeline for the unconscious Ye Yin Zhu.

Everything happened very quickly. By the time Okafur and Dis collided, Perkins had already brandished his fist at Ye Yin Zhu.



Oliveira, already within the dust cloud, reacted. He had realized that the princess and prince were still atop the city walls! His second brother, however, had already collided violently with Gold Behemoth Dis. He could only watch as Perkins' explosive fist was hurled toward Ye Yin Zhu. Even if he summoned his

Water-attribute Gigantic Dragon at this moment, it would already be too late.

Although Oliviera was extremely shocked at Ye Yin Zhu's previous methods and the subsequent results, he also had no choice but to concede that Ye Yin Zhu relied on practically his own power to use all resources in his disposal to protect Konya City from the plundering legion. The battle's victory could already be seen as theirs. Soon, this genius Divine Music Mage would die at the hands of that Gold Behemoth, and he couldn't help but painfully close his eyes. Except, exactly because he had closed his eyes at this moment, he had missed the most brilliant scene.



Violet light. Violet light twisted like an electric snake. Without any prior indication, it emerged in the space between Ye Yin Zhu and Perkins.

A strange scene appeared. Perkins' huge fist unexpectedly struck at that emerging, bizarre, spatial void and slid off to the side.

In that violet spatial void, an incomparably large, violet-colored sword came into being, covering the sky. A horizontal swing, not in the least bit being ostentatiously brazen, struck at Perkins' body and unexpectedly sent his gigantic body flying.

Roar——

Dis. It was as if he were a Buddha that had consumed stimulants. He sent the Earth-attribute Gigantic Dragon Rhubarb and the attached Okafur flying with a single slap. His broad, vicious gaze then fell upon that immense, flickering amethyst sword, a weapon which exceeded 10 meters in length, atop Konya City's walls. The insanity and anger in his eyes vanished in an instant. The gold hair on his body shuddered with a wave-like motion, and his eyes brimmed with excitement and ecstasy. "The Amethyst comes into being. An Amethyst has actually come into being!"

The violet-colored fissure split open, and the large violet sword transformed into an intense violet light before disappearing from sight. A tall, stalwart body strode forth from the violet spatial void. His figure was indistinct, shrouded with a layer of hazy violet light. This violet light was unexpectedly more dazzling and resplendent than the sun's radiance.

Bending down, the figure embraced Ye Yin Zhu atop the city walls and spoke aloud his thoughts. “You fool. Why do you never summon me when you’re in danger? Is our Equal Life Contract merely decoration? You don’t have any faith in me. If it wasn’t for the Amethyst Sword informing me of your crisis and tearing through space to bring me to you, you might have truly died.”

If Ye Yin Zhu woke up at this moment, he would certainly recognize the owner of this familiar voice—Zi.

Slowly lifting his head, Zi’s gaze fell upon Perkins, who was getting up. In the blink of an eye, the hazy violet light shrouding his body immediately intensified.

Perkins didn’t attack again. His vision was already completely recovered by now, and like Dis, the golden hairs on his body shuddered violently in a wave-like motion. With a bit of a stammer, he said, “You— you are...”

Chapter 34 – Hero or Villain? (III)

Zi waved his right hand, prompting the Amethyst Sword to appear once more. He pointed it at the vast, distant sky. With a chilling, forceful voice, he spoke one word. “Amethyst——”

Perkins completely lost all of his spirit. “Amethyst; it really is an Amethyst.” His eyes no longer held killing intent or fighting spirit. He subconsciously retreated a few steps, glancing to the side of the battlefield at Dis.

An esoteric, garbled sound could be heard from Zi’s mouth. It seemed to be a kind of unusual language. Of everyone present, only the two Gold Behemoths could understand it. Facing Zi and his Amethyst Sword, even if their heights surpassed twenty meters, even if their Behemoth defense was still durable, the Gold Behemoths gradually retreated, repeatedly nodding. When they retreated back to where those other seriously wounded Behemoths laid collapsed on the ground, they turned back to face Zi’s direction and slowly bowed. Their large eyes unexpectedly revealed a gaze filled with fear and reverence.

Brilliant rays of light flashed. The two pointed ten ring-laden fingers in front of them, and, with a flicker of silvery light, the eighty-something seriously wounded

Behemoths on the ground were all placed within the space rings. The two Gold Behemoths glanced at each other before roaring lowly at the same time. Not caring about the few surviving beastmen of the other three races, they used their quickest speed to run in the direction of the Northern Wasteland. They forged through the tall and erect mountains that pierced through the clouds, running as if on level ground. Within a few moments, they had already disappeared from sight.

Zi's eyes followed the two Gold Behemoths' departure, the corners of his mouth displaying a faint trace of a smile. Lowering his head to look at Ye Yin Zhu nestled close to his chest, he slowly set him down on the city wall. His figure flashed, transforming into a violet light, and vanished without needing to enter Ye Yin Zhu's body.



It was over. This great battle had finally ended. Ultimately, everything had happened extremely fast. Almost no one was able to clearly see what had happened atop the city walls. Dis' hellish shock wave, upon ramming into the Earth Wall, had created a great cloud of dust.

The vast majority of the Dragon Cavalry had been shaken, confused. The few clear-headed knights were too busy trying to avoid the falling debris of rocks and mud. They merely saw a flickering violet light atop the city walls. At the same time, Okafur and his Gigantic Dragon had been sent flying back by Gold Behemoth Dis. In the wake of the emergence of that unusual voice, the Gold Behemoths and their kin had already disappeared altogether. All that remained in front of Konya City was a chaotic plain of desolation while the city walls laid in ruins.

Okafur and his Gigantic Dragon fell from the sky, confused. When they crawled back up, everything had already ended. Okafur used his dragonspear to support his body. Surrounded by the strong, bloody stench in front of Konya City, he muttered to himself, "Dead, all dead. The Falcon Dragons are all dead. How can I explain this to my grandfather?!"

The Falcon Dragons' place in the entire Milan Empire's Dragon Cavalry Legion was absolutely crucial. Not mentioning anything else, for just being used for

reconnaissance and ambush missions, they had an efficiency which the rest of the armed forces were incapable of matching. Even though a Falcon Dragon was merely a rank 5 magical beast, its value was greater than a Maginot Iron Dragon and Earthbound Swift Dragon combined.

“Second Brother.” Oliveira ran up to Okafur, both brothers now somewhat despondent.

Okafur’s gaze hardened abruptly. “Third Brother, what is going on? Why, why did our tamed dragons suddenly go mad?”

Oliveira forced a smile and said, “I also don’t know. Maybe our mages have something to do with it. Yin Zhu united all of the mages to cast Divine Music Magic, and afterward, the tamed dragons went crazy.”

Okafur snarled, “When I’m not here, you are the commander-in-chief. How can you allow a mage to act so recklessly? Do you not realize that this killed a thousand tamed dragons, among which were five hundred Falcon Dragons? Even on the entire Longinus Continent, I’m afraid you can’t even gather as many Falcon Dragons together.”

Oliveira hung his head. At this moment, he still hadn’t woken from this incomparably stupefying battle. From beginning to end, their five hundred strong Dragon Cavalry hadn’t done anything. This life-threatening battle was completely between the mages and the enemy.

“Second Brother, calm down. Although our losses are disastrous, the beastmen’s losses also aren’t small. Furthermore, I am not in charge here. Prince Fisichella and Princess Xiang Luan are both atop the city walls with their Milan Ruby Cross Shield Emblems. I had no other choice but to carry out their orders.”

“Ah! The Princess and Prince! Shit! I forgot. Quick, we need to get to the top of the city walls.” Okafur didn’t have time to feel any heartache for those tamed dragons. He was currently on duty, his mission and priority being to rescue those two esteemed royal family members. Previously, when he had seen Dis launch an attack at his younger brother and the Dragon Cavalry Knights, his brain had clouded over with rage, and he’d rushed downward. Now, he was thinking of the unfavorable aftermath concerning the Princess and Prince’s safety.

The two youngest brothers of the Violet Clan didn’t dare to neglect this. Using

their fastest speed, they arrived at the chaotic, destroyed Konya City.

To say the least, the luck of those Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts students were excellent. Those mages whom Ye Yin Zhu had borrowed spiritual force from were originally all behind him. After Perkins had attacked Ye Yin Zhu, the destroyed city walls were in the vicinity of Ye Yin Zhu's body or in front of him, and thus, the destruction hadn't spread to those unconscious mages. Although the dust had covered them with filth, they were just merely unconscious.

Very quickly, Oliveira found Xiang Luan among those unconscious mages. "The Princess is here."

Okafur whispered, "The Prince? Where is his Highness the Prince?"

Oliveira grimaced and said, "Immediately dispatch people to try and find him. I hope he's within the city."

Okafur immediately passed down the order. At the same time, his gaze fell upon the extremely visible mage atop the city walls. The Divine Celestial Protection flickered with a milky white light, its defenses protecting the already comatose Ye Yin Zhu. His complexion appeared somewhat pale, but he looked peaceful, the pain that had been visible on his creased forehead having vanished completely.

"Is he the one that killed our tamed dragons?" Okafur's breathing was unsteady as he ruthlessly glared at Ye Yin Zhu.

Oliveira nodded.

Okafur clenched his fists tightly, a dark blue radiance of dou qi fluctuating unstably around his body. An ominous glint flickered in his eyes as he recalled the Falcon Dragons perishing, of how his own Gigantic Dragon mount had narrowly avoiding self-detonation because of the << Soaring Dragon's Cry >>. He was brimming with hatred toward this mage who had created such terrifying draconic explosions.

"Second Brother, don't." Oliveira was very familiar with the fiery temper of his Second Brother. Both him and his eldest brother, Austin, were always impulsive people. If their bad tempers arose, then they would completely disregarded any

possible consequences for their actions.

Okafur argued angrily, “Don’t? Oliveira, don’t you know that not only are the Falcon Dragons the pride of the Empire, they are also the pride of our Violet Clan? Many of those five hundred Falcon Dragon Cavalry were our clan members. How much of grandfather’s meticulous care in cultivating them was wasted? Those Falcon Dragons... every one of them is worth ten thousand gold with the inclusion of the Dragon Cavalry Knight and its equipments. A single Falcon Dragon would be a priceless treasure in any country, yet this bastard actually killed off the Falcon Dragons! Get out of my way; I’m going to kill him. Right now, everyone here are our people; when they return, they will report to the upper management that he was actually killed by the beastmen. They will also not investigate this matter. I’m going to avenge our deceased comrades.”

“It’s best if you don’t move. Otherwise, I can’t guarantee that your younger sister will be able to stay alive.” An icy, cruel voice faintly rung out into the still air, immediately attracting Okafur’s attention. To approach two Indigo Rank War Masters without them noticing, that was already enough to prove the adversary’s strength.

Okafur stared at Sura, only to see that Rolande was held close to his chest. The Angel’s Sigh in Sura’s right hand was pressed against the main artery in Rolande’s neck. A cold light flashed through his eyes. That icy, murderous gaze made him appear like a true killer, one who could strike at any time.

Oliveira hastily spoke up. “Sura, don’t be impulsive. My elder brother is merely agitated; we wouldn’t do anything to Ye Yin Zhu.”

Sura smiled, his smile brimming with ice and disdain. He indifferently said, “The Milan Empire’s magnificent Gold Star Dragon Cavalry Commander turns out to merely be a despicable, vile character that raises his hand against his own people.

“What were you doing when we were facing the beastmen plundering legion? Your original mission was to guard Konya City, but you violated the order, mobilised your troops, and then left without explicit approval. According to Imperial Martial Law, what crimes would you be guilty of?

“When the beastmen army of tens of thousands strong came to Konya City,

where were you? Sure, Ye Yin Zhu killed a thousand tamed dragons, but he also ward off close to a hundred Behemoths, including two Gold Behemoths and countless beastmen. Moreover, he annihilated the enemy. In my opinion, not to mention a thousand tamed dragons, if you were in his place and had ten thousand Dragon Cavalry, it wouldn't be possible for you to accomplish the same."

"You..." Okafur's face was flushed red with anger at Sura, but as it happened, there was nothing he could say to refute it.

Sura snorted coldly. "Me what? Okafur, you should realize something first. In this battle, not only is Ye Yin Zhu not an enemy of the Empire, instead, he's a hero, a genuine hero. Oliveira, let me ask you this: What is behind Konya City?"

Oliveira automatically responded. "Puglia Plains."

Sura continued coldly. "If these tens of thousands strong beastmen legion led by Behemoths entered Puglia Plains, what would happen to the Milan Empire?"

Oliveira was suddenly at a loss for words, his eyes filled with terror. He had read and re-read martial laws until he was familiar with it, so Milan Empire's internal topography was extremely familiar to him. He naturally knew what this meant. His entire body was drenched with cold sweat immediately while he was completely speechless.

Sura elaborated further. "It's true that the tamed dragons and Dragon Cavalry are precious, but when weighed against Puglia Plains... well, you should clearly understand which of the two is more important. Besides, these thousand tamed dragons were exchanged for close to a hundred seriously injured Behemoths and the destruction of at least four beastmen legions. If you can't balance out the variables, then go back and ask Generalissimo Maldini whether Ye Yin Zhu is a hero or a villain when all's said and done."

Chapter 35 – Sura’s Story (I)

Faced with Sura’s question, the two brothers had nothing to say and just looked at each other in dismay. Okafur’s clenched fists gradually relaxed.

“What Sura said is right. Ye Yin Zhu has done an outstanding service for the Empire—he is a genuine hero. Even if Great Master Lunar was here, he may not have been able to accomplish everything that Ye Yin Zhu has done here today. For this matter, I can explain to Generalissimo Maldini on both of your behalfs.” With the support of two Dragon Cavalry Knights, Fisichella climbed the city wall, his gaze falling upon Ye Yin Zhu’s body. Only, his eyes were filled with complete zealotry, a close-to-worshipful light.

Oliveira tapped Okafur and bowed, saying, “Yes, your Highness. This subordinate will listen and obey your Highness’ command.”

Okafur nodded somewhat unwillingly at this, saluting Fisichella at the same time.

Fisichella said, “Good. Generals, please clean up the battlefield first. Purge the remains of the beastmen and tally how many spoils of war we have obtained as well. Some of our Falcon Dragon Cavalry may have survived the fall.”

“Yes, your Highness.”



One day later. Mjolnir Stronghold.

“What?” Guti slapped the table and stood up. Before him, a corner of the black onyx table unexpectedly broke off because of his slap. His dark, chilling gaze seemed to want to devour the messenger. “Say that again.”

The tigerman that crouched on the floor had over half his hair burnt off, along with a broken arm. Trembling, he said, “Revered Tribal Chief, our, our plundering legion was completely wiped out.”

“No. That’s impossible.” Guti’s breathing was uneven as he bellowed, “Don’t tell me our Behemoths are herbivores? Dis and Perkins are considered the strongest amongst the Behemoths. With them in the lead, how could the forty-

thousand-strong plundering legion not seize a small town with walls only ten meters high? Explain what happened.” If the Tigerman in front of him wasn’t his native kin, then he probably would have already torn him to shreds.

“We were ambushed. We hadn’t even reached Konya City yet when the enemy ambushed us. The casualties then were disastrous. With Lord Dis and Lord Perkins guiding us, we, with great difficulty, reached Konya City, but we then came across an enemy comprised of Dragon Cavalry and mages. Revered Tribal Chief, this is a conspiracy. This is absolutely a conspiracy!” As he said this, the Tigerman lifted his head and looked at the blue-cloaked Emerson standing beside Guti.

Guti’s ice-cold, bloodthirsty gaze slowly shifted toward Emerson, his glare at the human’s back causing Emerson to tremble. “Mister Emerson, I need an explanation. A plundering legion of forty thousand, comprised of the most devote of the people of Thor, the most elite army under my control, has now returned with less than a hundred or so men.” His intense killing intent assailed Emerson’s seemingly frail body like a tsunami.

“Tribal Chief Guti, that’s impossible. Our stratagem was flawless; how could the enemy have known and taken initiative?” said Emerson, somewhat panicked. Although he had a lot of confidence in himself, he didn’t have the confidence to be able to break out of the impenetrable defense that was Mjolnir Stronghold.

Guti coldly countered, “The results are already arranged before me. Tell me, what is this?”

Emerson sucked in a breath of air and turned toward the Tigerman that had returned alive, saying, “Speak quickly. What did you come across? Was it a large amount of Dragon Cavalry? We are currently holding up all of Sacred Heart City’s Dragon Cavalry, though.”

The Tigerman shook his head, his tiger eyes displaying a panicked expression. “No, what defeated us wasn’t the Dragon Cavalry. It was the mages, those horrible mages. We were just prepared to attack when Konya City suddenly released an intense wave of magic. It was a Violet Rank Great Magister. There was an unusual song. When the Milanese tamed dragons heard that song, it was like they had all gone mad. They rushed toward us, then...” Extremely frightened,

the Tigerman disjointedly explained the situation at Konya City.

Listening to the Tigerman's words, Emerson sank into contemplation. After a long while, he said, "This is truly too inconceivable. A song actually caused the total defeat of the tens of thousands plundering legion troops? Was it a mage from a branch of Spiritual Discipline, a Divine Music Mage? To the best of my knowledge, however, the most powerful Divine Music Mage of the Milan Empire is only about Cyan Rank in strength. Even if it really was a Violet Rank, I have also never heard of a Divine Music Mage being able to cause dragons to explode! Tribal Chief Guti, this matter is very strange. Please allow me to return to investigate."

Just as the words left Emerson's mouth, an enormous shadow already appeared before him. Before he could react, Guti's large hand had already grabbed at his throat, lifting him off the ground. With a piercing, glacial voice, Guti heavily and roughly breathed into Emerson's ear, "I don't know what's strange about all this. I only know that my four legions, in addition to eighty six Behemoths, have been completely wiped out. Up until now, not a single Behemoth has returned. Don't you know that the plundering legion dispatched held a third of our Thor Tribe's strength? With Maldini's prior rush, I have already lost too much. The plundering legion has now become like this. Mister Emerson, even if I were to tear you apart, the hatred in my heart will be hard to resolve."

"Tribal... Chief... Guti..., our... cooperation with... you... is absolutely... sincere.... This matter... give... me... a while.... We'll... send... you... a gift... first... immediately..., those things... should suffice... to prove... our... sincerity...." Emerson had an extremely difficult time breathing, and his face had already turned a dark reddish-purple color. If Guti's large hand tightened again, his life would be on the verge of leaving him.

Hearing the word 'gift,' Guti's complexion gradually eased. His hand threw Emerson to the side. "I hope you aren't lying. If not, you should know the consequences. I'll give you ten days to find the truth of this matter. Get lost — —!"

"Yes. I will definitely investigate and find out." Emerson near-fanatically tried to escape the large tent.

Guti's complexion became more unsightly. If he didn't need to cooperate with the power backing Emerson, this loss would have been an absolutely fatal strike to him. "Pass down my orders: Stop all military operations at Sacred Heart City. Recall all troops to Mjolnir Stronghold."



Ye Yin Zhu woke up hazily from his slumber with a splitting headache. Within his mind, new illusions would frequently manifest, and all kinds of chaotic and complex moods unceasingly assaulted his thoughts. He couldn't help but moan painfully.

"Ah! Yin Zhu, you're awake." Sura's pleasantly surprised voice rang out. Ye Yin Zhu only felt a small, icy hand touch his forehead. It was an indescribably comfortable feeling. He automatically grabbed that hand and held it firmly, not letting it go.

A blush rose up on Sura's face, but he didn't struggle.

Ye Yin Zhu, with some difficulty, opened his eyes. The first thing he saw was the deep concern within Sura's eyes. "Sura, your voice just now was really pleasant to hear."

Sura's heart jolted. He just realized that in his impatience, he'd accidentally revealed his female voice. Hurriedly trying to change the subject, he said, "Yin Zhu, are you okay? Are you still feeling unwell anywhere?"

"My head is very sore, but leaving your hand there makes me feel very comfortable." Following his complete return to coherency, his spiritual force gradually dispersed those chaotic moods. With the assistance of the Pure Brightness Spirit Guardian, his mind stabilized, the pain gradually growing distant.

Sura's face was cold as he said, "Yin Zhu, you were too audacious this time. I heard the Spiritual Mage say that your harmonization of Spiritual Magic was extremely dangerous. If it weren't for the Pure Brightness Spirit Guardian assisting you this time, you might have become brain-dead."

Ye Yin Zhu helplessly said, "But then what else could I have done! I also didn't know that this Spiritual Harmonization Magic would be so dangerous. Originally,

I thought that since everyone has indistinguishable spiritual forces, there would be no problem harmonizing with all of them. Only later did I discover that harmonizing spiritual forces also included harmonizing with everyone's moods. The onslaught of those moods indeed made me feel awfully unwell. Sura, how's the battle? The beastmen?"

Sura stared at him blankly before saying, "You don't know what happened?"

Ye Yin Zhu logically and obviously said, "Yes! I borrowed everyone's spiritual forces and then I played the song << Soaring Dragon's Cry >>. According to the plan, the tamed dragons should've descended into a berserk state upon hearing my zither song. If they could rush into the beastmen, they should definitely be able to deal a lot of damage to the enemy. But, when I used the Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither to play << Soaring Dragon's Cry >>, my consciousness became completely immersed within the zither song. It was like my whole body became very cold. After that, I don't remember anything. Don't tell me that my zither song failed?"

Chapter 35 – Sura's Story (III)

Sura, distressed, said, "Yin Zhu, I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. But since you have already given me so many things, can you give me one last item? I want the ring. You can keep all the contents, but give the ring to me." As he said this, he pointed at the silver ring on Ye Yin Zhu's hand.

Ye Yin Zhu said, shocked, "It's not that I'm unwilling to part with it, but this was given to me by Grandfather Qin. I..."

Sura practically begged, "I don't need the space ring's storage function, nor do I want any of its contents. I just want the ring."

Ye Yin Zhu hesitated for a moment. He looked at the strong yearning in Sura's eyes and helplessly said, "Alright. I really can't do anything about you. Fortunately, you promised to support me for the rest of your life. If it was someone else, I really wouldn't be willing to give it away. I'll undo the spiritual bond so that you can use it immediately." As he said this, he manipulated some of his already-recovered spiritual force, transferring the contents of the silver ring to the sapphire space ring. He then handed over the silver ring to Sura.

“Help me place it on my ring finger.” Sura stretched out his right hand. 1

Ye Yin Zhu wasn't suspicious of him at all. He automatically slid it onto Sura's finger. Just as he was about to withdraw his hand, Sura abruptly flipped Ye Yin Zhu's hand over and gripped his wrist. Ye Yin Zhu felt something cool and slightly heavy slide into the palm of his hand.

He withdrew his hand and looked at his palm. Ye Yin Zhu discovered that Sura had pressed a silver coin into his hand. The silver coin appeared to be a somewhat special. A regular silver coin would display a magical six-pointed star engraving, as was commonly used on the continent, but this silver coin seemed to be a bit worn. The design on top had become very indistinct. The silver coin even had some corrosion and lacked any luster.

“Sura, why did you give me a coin?” Ye Yin Zhu asked in puzzlement.

Sura looked at the silver coin he placed in Ye Yin Zhu's hand. At this very moment, his eyes brimmed with a content light. “Yin Zhu, thank you. Consider this us exchanging gifts with one another. You have given me too many things. In return, I'm giving you this. As long as you have this silver coin, I can tell a story for you to hear, okay?” As if relieved from a burden, Sura's body seemed to become more relaxed. Idiot, this is exchanging keepsakes! Don't you realize that this silver coin is extremely important to me?

Ye Yin Zhu nodded, asking, “And the story has something to do with you?”

Sura didn't reply. He walked up to Ye Yin Zhu and sat down beside him.

“There was a woman who made a living by scavenging through garbage. One day, she picked up some worn out metal to sell off on her way home. When she turned into an empty alley, a hoodlum popped out. This hoodlum held a knife within his hand, and he pressed this knife against the woman's chest. He maliciously ordered the woman to hand over all the money she had on her. The woman was terrified and stood there motionless. The hoodlum began to search her body. When he searched through the woman's pocket, he found a shabby pouch. Within the pouch was her money. The hoodlum grabbed that pouch, turned away from the woman, and left. At that moment, the woman reacted. She immediately threw herself forward, and with lightning-speed, she seized the pouch. The hoodlum used the knife to prod at the woman, threatening her to let

go. The woman, however, clenched the money pouch tightly with both hands, not relinquishing her grip no matter what. The woman unwaveringly held onto the bag and called for help like her life depended on it. Her call for help disturbed the residents of the alley, and those who heard her shout rushed over and cooperated in arresting the hoodlum.

“Everyone helped the woman by detaining the hoodlum and taking him to the nearby city jail. A city guard greeted them. After interrogation, the hoodlum pleaded guilty to mugging. That woman stood there trembling, drops of cold sweat covering her face.

“The city guard then comforted her. ‘You don’t need to be afraid.’

“The woman replied, ‘I’m in a lot of pain. He broke my fingers.’

“As she said this, she lifted her right hand. The people realized that her right forefinger drooped down flabbily.

“She would rather let her finger be broken than relinquish her grip on her purse. Clearly, the contents of the purse were important to her. The city guard opened the money pouch, and everyone present was immediately stupefied. There wasn’t a lot in that pouch, only a silver coin. Many of them believed that a single silver coin was truly and excessively not worth breaking a finger or becoming a criminal.

“The city guard was perplexed. How strong was this woman to not give up on this meager silver coin even after experiencing the acute pain of breaking a finger?

“The woman was given basic treatment later before she walked home alone. She walked to a fruit stand with enticing fruit and carefully picked some. She used her silver coin to buy a pear, an apple, a tangerine, a banana, a stick of sugarcane, a strawberry... She bought each fruit sold at the fruit stand until there was nothing left of her silver coin. People who knew of her recent experience were baffled. Could it be that she unhesitantly sacrificed her finger to save a single silver coin, only to unexpectedly use it to buy some tasty fruit?

“The woman carried the bag of fruit and left the city to head straight towards the public cemetery on the outskirts. She walked towards a new grave in a secluded spot. The woman stood in front of the new grave for a long time, her

face seemingly graced with a satisfied smile. Afterwards, she leaned the bag on the gravestone and murmured to herself, 'Child, mama let you down. Mama has no skill and couldn't do anything to cure your disease. I unexpectedly let you depart the world so early, after just eight years. Do you still remember? When you left, ma asked you what your most cherished desire was. You said, 'I never ate any fresh fruit. If I could eat even one fresh fruit, it would be perfect.' Ma was ashamed; she actually was unable to fulfill your last wish. In order to treat your illness, our family no longer had the money to even buy a single fruit. But, child, yesterday, mama was finally able to pay back the debt from borrowing money to treat your illness in full. Plus, mama still had a silver coin left over today. Child, ma can buy fruit. Can you see? Ma has a tangerine, a pear, an apple, and even a banana... all fresh. All of them, ma spent money to buy you all these fresh fruit, all of them not even slightly mushy. Ma carefully picked them one by one for you to eat. Child, can you taste it...'”

After he told this story, tears were already streaming down Sura's cheeks. Ye Yin Zhu stared at the slightly worn silver coin in his hand. He suddenly felt that this silver coin was very heavy.

Sura continued. “That woman, she was my mama. The eight year-old boy who died was my younger twin brother. That day, I had followed mama from beginning to end. I regret, I regret that I didn't have the power to protect mama, that I didn't have the money to help my younger brother treat his illness. From that day on, I fell in love with money. I vowed that I must give mama a life of luxury. That day was also the first day I stole something. The silver coin in your hand is the very same silver coin that mama poured countless blood and sweat into earning to buy my younger brother fruit. If mama knew I had stolen things, she would've definitely gotten very, very angry with me, but I absolutely couldn't allow the culmination of her hard work, that silver coin, end up in the hands of others. Since that year, I've always had this silver coin on me, constantly using it to remind me. This is mama's love.”

“What happened next? Your mother?” Ye Yin Zhu asked inquisitively.

Sura's eyes held distress. “I tried very hard; I tried very hard to become more powerful. Everyday, I would practice as if my life depended on it. I would go out to steal a few coins before returning. I would use every possible method to make

sure mama didn't become suspicious. But mama was really, very exhausted. When I was 13 years-old, she had fallen ill from constantly overworking herself and passed away. Although I had gone crazy and begun stealing money heavily to give her treatment for her illness, but—she still died. When she was faced with death, mama told me who my father was. It's because of him. If it wasn't for that bastard, mama wouldn't have become like this. I vowed in front of mama's grave that inevitably there will be a day where I will seize back everything that belongs to me and take revenge for my mama and younger brother."

Wrapping his arm around Sura's shoulder, Ye Yin Zhu, choked with emotion, said, "Sura, don't cry. Regardless of what happens, I will stand beside you. Your business is my business. But this silver coin is really too precious. I..."

Sura abruptly lifted his head and tearfully said, "Don't tell me you cannot accept it. When I stole it, I made a resolution. If there was a day where I could find someone who was as good as mama, I would give him this silver coin. And you are that person I've been looking for."

Ye Yin Zhu once again looked at the silver coin in his hand. At this very moment, in his heart, this silver coin's value had already risen boundlessly. This was no longer a silver coin; instead, this was Sura's trust and affections for him. Any divine device would never be as precious as this silver coin.

"Alright, I accept. I will definitely take care of it properly." Ye Yin Zhu didn't immediately place the silver coin in his space ring. Instead, he concealed it in his shirt, placing it so it rested against his skin—close to his heart.

Sura wiped the tears off his face. "Several years have already passed. Every time I think about them, I can't help but cry. Yin Zhu, am I too weak?"

Ye Yin Zhu wiped the tears at the corner of his own eyes and said, "How can that be? Am I not also crying alongside you? Sura, who is your father? He and your mother..."

Sura's complexion changed slightly. "He was a great nobleman. At that time, mother was merely his maid. When mother was on the verge of leaving his mansion with the intention of living a new life, that night, he raped her. Mother left that place sorrowed and humiliated, but a few months later, she discovered

me and my younger brother. Don't ask me who he is. I won't tell you. This is something I must settle on my own."

"Yin Zhu, Sura, let's go. Have you finished packing?" Xiang Luan's voice came from outside the room.

Ye Yin Zhu and Sura glanced at each other. The mood gone, Sura grabbed Ye Yin Zhu's Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither beside him and handed it to Yin Zhu. He said, "Your zither didn't break, but the bow strings have all snapped."

That day, when the song finished, Ye Yin Zhu's mind had nearly been driven to the brink of insanity. In the end, he still hadn't been able to completely control the zither song, which lead to the sound waves going out of control and the bow strings of Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar snapping. One should know that these were seven strings made of dragon tendons! Wanting to re-string the zither wouldn't be easy to do.

Ye Yin Zhu somewhat helplessly accepted the Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither and said, "I have no choice but to think of some way to fix it later. We need to go."

Sura masked his emotions well. When they left the room, the sorrow on his face had already completely disappeared.

The reinforcements dispatched from Sacred Heart City consisted of ten thousand Heavy Cavalry and thirty thousand infantry, a formidable troop arrangement. At this moment, they were already outside Konya City, ready and waiting to set off. The five hundred Dragon Cavalry that had lost their mounts only had one task: to protect the prince and prince by their Highnesses' side.

Ye Yin Zhu appeared, and all the troops immediately became quiet. Everyone stared at him, their gazes becoming slightly different. The Dragon Cavalry Knights' gazes had plenty of fear and anger in them, while the students of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts had, for the most part, admiration in them. After all, these were children of nobility that didn't see the deaths of tamed dragons to be very significant. At the very least, Ye Yin Zhu had helped saved their lives.

"Idol, quickly get on," Fisichella called out to Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu helplessly said, “Your Highness the prince, you shouldn’t continue calling me that.”

Fisichella chuckled mischievously and said, “I also don’t want to, but I can’t help it! Idol, you were truly, incredibly awesome. Get on first; then we can talk.”

Ye Yin Zhu and Sura got in the carriage together. This first carriage certainly had very little occupants. Naturally, this was because Xiang Luan and Fisichella’s identities. Inside the carriage, before Ye Yin Zhu and Sura had joined, there was Xiang Luan, Hai Yang, and Fisichella. This luxurious, spacious carriage seemed to have more than enough space to spare.

“Idol, this time, you can claim a lot of credit for yourself for the enemy’s defeat. Our side’s losses only amounted to a thousand tamed dragons and five hundred Falcon Dragon Cavalry. And even though the opponent’s Behemoths can’t be described as seriously injured, we annihilated close to forty thousand troops of the army. From what I see, you don’t even need to go back to school this time; you can immediately become a Court Mage.”

Xiang Luan lifted her hand and rapped Fisichella’s head. “What nonsense are you saying? Yin Zhu is still young; naturally, he will return to school. Though, I am verily looking forward to seeing what Imperial Father will bestow upon him; I wonder what it will be?”

Fisichella rubbed his head and softly said to himself, “With you to say good words on his behalf, can something bad even be bestowed?”

Sura sighed lightly and said, “No. You succeeded. Only, you seemed to have been too successful. In addition, the price paid is enormous. In addition to the five hundred Falcon Dragon reinforcements, altogether, a thousand and sixty tamed dragons died in this battle. The result, however, was also tremendous. The enemy was annihilated. The only thing I’m not clear on is what happened when that Gold Behemoth rushed to the top of the city walls to attack you. Afterward, you weren’t injured, and that Gold Behemoth had disappeared. He had shot me down from the city walls, so I could only vaguely see a violet light soar into the sky. What happened then?”

Just as he asked this question, Sura suddenly remembered that there was no point for him to ask. He laughed self-deprecatingly. “Why am I asking you? At

that time, you would've been unconscious, so how would you know? Yin Zhu, I really didn't expect that you, who is the normally open and guileless, would actually be even crazier than Oliveira during combat."

Chapter 35 – Sura's Story (II)

"Crazy? Me? Elder Brother Oliveira said that war is like a game, and the commander is the game master. In order to ultimately attain victory, any and all methods should be used, even if we need to sacrifice our own troops to obtain it. I am merely following his military strategy and tactics! Was I mistaken?" Ye Yin Zhu hadn't seen the bloody battlefield properly, so he was currently unable to imagine the scene of exploding dragons killing the army of several tens of thousands of beastmen back then.

Sura smiled slightly and said, "No, of course you're not mistaken. You saved Konya City and even all of Puglia Plains. You're a hero. It's just very difficult for me to imagine someone like you being capable of turning this absolutely disadvantageous situation around. Perhaps only Blue Dias would've been able to achieve this. Sometimes, I really suspect that you are from Blue Dias."

"Sura." A voice as pleasant as a phoenix's cry came from behind the door. The door opened, and Xiang Luan entered the room. Today, she wore a pink cheongsam, completely covering up all of her skin. Even her neck was covered by a little collar. A smile graced her beautiful, delicate face. Clearly in a good mood, her remarkable beauty naturally stunned Ye Yin Zhu every time he saw her.

"Princess Xiang Luan." Sura got up to salute her, but his expression was very cold.

Ye Yin Zhu struggled to sit up. He didn't care very much about the Ruler and Subject Etiquette, but since this girl came, he felt that it wouldn't be good to be lying down.

"Ah! Yin Zhu, you're awake." When she saw that Ye Yin Zhu had already woken up, Xiang Luan immediately overlooked Sura and sat near Ye Yin Zhu, leaving

little space between them. She scanned him from top to bottom, fearful that Ye Yin Zhu was missing a body part.

Ye Yin Zhu looked at her with a blush on his face. “Senior Xiang Luan, I’m fine.”

Xiang Luan relaxed and said, “Fortunately, you are alright, my great hero. If Sura hadn’t said that it would be inconvenient for a girl to take care of you, Hai Yang and I would’ve stayed.”

With a faint fragrance emitting from her body along with her body practically next to his, Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t help but flush. “Senior Xiang Luan, thank you for your concern.”

Xiang Luan giggled and said, “Don’t be so awkward, okay? When we climbed the mountain, you had already carried me. You weren’t like this back then.”

Ye Yin Zhu embarrassedly said, “It was an emergency at that time. I...”

Xiang Luan smiled and said, “Come on, I know you are a shy shota, but sometimes I can’t see through you. I even saw your reluctance to kill the beastmen. Yin Zhu, I realize that you are becoming increasingly similar to the ideal hero of my heart. How about you pursue me? As long as you continue to try hard, maybe you really can succeed.”

“Cough cough.” To the side, Sura coughed twice. “Senior Xiang Luan, you didn’t come to see us in order to have Yin Zhu chase after you, right?”

Xiang Luan sent Sura a deep look. “I came to tell you to immediately go to Sacred Heart City. The battlefield here has already been swept through, and the reinforcements have also arrived. Generalissimo Maldini doesn’t feel at ease with Fisichella and I here, so he is making all of the Institution students go to Sacred Heart City. After we get there, we’re to return to Milan City.”

Ye Yin Zhu said in surprise, “Return? The war is already over?”

Xiang Luan nodded and said, “We just received news earlier this morning. The beastmen of Mjolnir Stronghold might not have known the legion sent to ambush Konya City were completely wiped out, but they had already completely retreated back to Mjolnir Stronghold to defend it. According to Generalissimo Maldini, Thor Tribe’s losses were tremendous. They are unable to recover their strength in a short amount of time, so our frontier will have a comparatively

longer period of peace once more.”

Sura sighed lightly. “No war is always good.”

Xiang Luan got up and said, “Okay, I’ll take my leave and let the two of you prepare. If Hai Yang knew Yin Zhu was awake, she will certainly be very happy. Oh, right. Yin Zhu, you need to be a bit more careful. Try to be together with the students as much as possible. Right now, the Dragon Cavalry have very strong complaints about you. After all, you killed their mounts, many of which could’ve been lifelong companions.”

Xiang Luan then left.

Ye Yin Zhu looked seriously at Sura and asked, “Is it not good to kill so much?”

Sura shook his head and explained, “That depends on what kind of killing. If you kill in order to protect your friends and country, then it isn’t wrong. Yin Zhu, don’t think too much on this. You didn’t willfully slaughter the innocent at all. If you didn’t kill those beastmen, even more of the Milan Empire’s population would’ve been killed. You only killed because it was necessary.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. “I also think so. Zi said that in order to protect yourself, you should deal the strongest blow to your enemy. The best solution is to kill your opponent, especially so they won’t become an inconvenience again.”

Just as Sura tried to correct him, Ye Yin Zhu suddenly said, “Sura, now that it’s just the two of us, you should explain this.” As he spoke, he lifted his hand and revealed the space ring upon his finger, flickering with a silvery light.

Looking at the ring sparkling with silvery light, Sura remained silent. Ye Yin Zhu also didn’t feel anxious as his clear eyes looked at Sura. He waited, waiting for Sura to explain.

“Yin Zhu, you are a good person. When we first met, I knew you were a good person. Yes, that beggar was me. You gave me money, and I still stole your ring. Aren’t I so despicable?” Sura laughed self-deprecatingly.

Ye Yin Zhu lightly shook his head and said, “No, in no way are you a despicable person. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have been friends.”

Sura’s vision was somewhat blurred. “I love money a lot. At least, before I

knew you, I felt that money was my everything. With money, I could go to school at Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. I could buy tasty things to eat, buy weapons and equipment that I liked, and also live more comfortably. With more money, I could do a lot of the things I missed doing.

“At that time, I didn’t have money, so I pretended to be a beggar in order to steal. The predecessors of assassins were, for the most part, thieves. Of course, I’m an expert at martial arts. I never believed that this world had any good people, so even if you didn’t give me money, I would’ve stolen from you. That is my explanation.”

As he said this, Sura felt for Angel’s Sigh and the Silver Dragon reverse scale up his sleeve before placing them in front of Ye Yin Zhu. “These were the things you had given me, and now I’m returning them to you. I can also forcefully sever the contract between Yin Bi and I, and you can gift him to someone else in the future. For example, Xiang Luan is very fond of ‘Yin Bi,’ and with her identity as the Imperial Princess, I believe she will also treat Yin Bi well. Unfortunately, the Eternal Substitute Puppet cannot be separated from me. In the future, I will think of a way to return something of equal value to you.”

Sura’s expression was very indifferent. His indifference didn’t contain even a single tinge of emotion. Having quietly settled all that he needed to do, he stood up and lowered his head. Although his body seemed very tranquil, at this moment, his heart shook.

Ye Yin Zhu’s gaze was also very serene, but it wasn’t indifferent. He saw that Sura had finished. “Are you done speaking?”

Sura nodded.

Ye Yin Zhu asked, “Nothing else to explain?”

Sura raised his head to look at him, before dully saying, “What other explanation do you want to listen to? Don’t tell me that you let me cheat you? Do you want me to tell you that I was forced by circumstances to steal from you at that time? No, I wasn’t. I stole from you because of my greedy heart. That’s all.”

Shaking his head, Ye Yin Zhu said, “No. That’s not what I want to hear. Sura, do you believe that returning these two things to me represents the end of our

relationship?”

Sura raised his head, a light flashing through his eyes. “What more do you want?”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled. “I don’t want anything. But, you already promised to give me food and help me tidy up my rooms for a lifetime. I have already paid the money for this. Even if you want to go back on the deal, I’m afraid it’s too late.”

“You...” Sura stared at him blankly, somewhat unwilling to believe him. He said, “You don’t blame me for lying to you for so long? For stealing and walking away with your important possessions?”

Ye Yin Zhu pressed Angel’s Sigh into Sura’s hand first before grasping the Silver Dragon reverse scale and pressing it against Sura’s chest. “People shouldn’t always live like this, no? Regardless of what you have previously done, I know of your sincerity toward me. We are best friends, good brothers. That is enough. Everyone has their own past. I don’t want your past to influence our relationship. Yi, Sura, why are your pectoral muscles so soft? Your undergarments seem very thick as well!”

Sura immediately reacted, slipping out of Ye Yin Zhu’s ‘clutches.’ Blushing heavily, he asked, “Why are you randomly groping my chest?” At this moment, his eyes were filled with shyness and embarrassment, but his heart no longer trembled. His body, however, began to shake slightly because of Ye Yin Zhu’s accidental groping just now.

“Well, the past has already past. Let’s not mention it in the future, okay? We are still the same as before.” From then on, pure Ye Yin Zhu never saw anything more from Sura’s body again.

Sura protected his chest with both of his arms. “That’s no good. Even if you don’t blame me, I don’t want to be forgiven. Yin Zhu, didn’t you know? When I met you again, I immediately wanted to return it to you, but I hesitated at that time. We became roommates, and I didn’t want you to despise me. Later on, we actually became friends, so I was even more reluctant to return it to you. I really didn’t want to lose you. I didn’t know that the things in this ring were so important to you.” As he said this, tears involuntarily fell from his eyes.

“Eh?” Ye Yin Zhu stared at him blankly. “Sura, don’t be like this. Didn’t I already

say that it's all in the past?"

Chapter 36 – The War of Arcadia (I)

The Longinus Continent, which had enjoyed several years of peace, suddenly became lively with war during the period of time when Ye Yin Zhu’s group left Konya City for Sacred Heart City. This was actually not because of the Mjolnir beastmen’s surprise attack on the Milan Empire. After all, this was a routine border war and was unlikely to have any effect on the interior regions of the continent.

This sudden war that emerged, however, affected the entire continent. It was a war between two countries, and these two countries even belonged to the same faction.

In the northern regions of the Longinus Continent, the heart of the region had always been the Milan Empire with their allied countries being Ascoli, Florence, and Palermo. In the southern regions, the Blue Dias Empire ruled. Similar to the Milan Empire, the Blue Dias Empire also had three allied countries: the Stormli Kingdom, the Wavast Kingdom, and the Arcadia Kingdom. These two power blocks were separated by Falan, located between the two sides. It was precisely because of Falan’s oppressive influence that the two sides were constrained from entering into a tremendously large clash.

From an overall strength perspective, Milan was the most powerful of the four northern countries, so it was the dominant power there. At the same time, however, there was the enormous threat of the Northern Wasteland. Even if the Milan Empire considered invading the south, they couldn’t send too many troops to do so, as some needed to be diverted to guard against the Northern Wasteland. Along with this, in the past, no country dared to offend Falan, so for a century, peace reigned on the Longinus Continent.

As the Milan Empire began to deal with the Northern Wasteland’s autumnal plundering, disharmony began to emerge within the southern regions of the continent. Within the Blue Dias Empire’s subsidiary kingdoms, war was unexpectedly brewing between the Kingdoms of Wavast and Arcadia.

The instigator of this matter just so happened to be Ye Yin Zhu.

When Ye Yin Zhu left Desolate Jade Sea back then, he had passed through Arcadia's capital, Luna City, and came across several provocative Wavast mages. The outside world had been strange to him, and when he was confronted with an opponent in such a high pressure situation, he used a surprise sound blade attack. He had killed the mages of Wavast Kingdom, and amongst those casualties was an Indigo Rank mage. In hindsight, he could've avoided the problem by walking away from it, but he did not. This brought the Kingdom of Arcadia no small amount of trouble.

As one of the most powerful country on the continent, even the Milan Empire treated mages as treasures, not to mention a second-rate kingdom like Wavast. When they suddenly obtained news of the mages' disappearances, their first reaction was to pressure the Kingdom of Arcadia. The Kingdom of Arcadia naturally hadn't admit to anything. Or possibly speaking, the Arcadian royal family also had no idea where those Wavast mages had disappeared to.

Both parties entered a momentary deadlock afterward. The Wavast Kingdom relied on the fact that their strength far surpassed Arcadia and forcefully demanded compensation from the kingdom. It could be assumed that they had exploited this opportunity to squeeze as much profit as possible from the Kingdom of Arcadia. If it were not for the Blue Dias Empire and Falan, then with Wavast glaring at Arcadia like a tiger watching his prey, perhaps Arcadia would have long been forced to become a part of Wavast.

Against the expectations of the Wavast Kingdom, however, the Kingdom of Arcadia's royal family's manner was absolutely unyielding this time, in spite of everything. They fundamentally didn't acknowledge the Wavast mages' disappearances in Luna City. Both sides immediately entered a stalemate.

The Wavast Kingdom naturally wouldn't let something like this pass. The Blue Dias Empire declared their neutrality in this situation, so Wavast sent a hundred thousand armed forces, using this army to pressure the Arcadian border.



Feir City, a strategic city on the border of the Kingdom of Arcadia.

With Arcadia's power, even if the entire country was flipped over, barely eighty thousand troops could be mustered. As for the quality of the troops, well—since

the people of Arcadia had always been lazy in nature, the troops of Arcadia were naturally unable to compare with the Wavast Kingdom. From these eighty thousand troops, not even a Dragon Cavalry Legion could be formed. Their opponent, however, consisted of the elite of the Wavast Kingdom.

Wavast's show of strength was comprised of two Dragon Cavalry Legions and a twenty-thousand-strong Heavy Cavalry Legion. Within the Wavast Kingdom's army, there were even a hundred mages of every discipline, the vast majority being Fire mages.

Atop the walls of Feir City, all of the high-ranking military officers of Arcadia had grave expressions as they stared at the huge thirty or so Wavast garrisons stationed outside. Their hearts were heavy. They clearly understood that since the Wavast had dispatched their troops already, it was no longer a simple matter of demanding compensation. If their army was to be defeated, then the aftermath was too horrible to contemplate.

These Arcadian generals hadn't wielded a weapon for several years. Most of them were puzzled as to why the Arcadian royal family was so unyielding at this time. This was a war that was absolutely impossible to win!

Yesterday, the Wavast army had already arrived outside of Feir City and spent a day consolidating their forces. Today, they could clearly see from atop the city walls that a large fraction of those military forces had begun to mobilize. It appeared that they were planning to launch an all-out attack upon Feir City.

"Great Master Qin Shang, what should we do now?" The Kingdom of Arcadia's Marshal, Solskjaer, was somewhat panicked as he questioned the older mage beside him.

Qin Shang calmly smiled and said, "Do not worry and just look down. Marshal Solskjaer, please order all of the cavalry under your control to prepare to attack at any moment. Since his Majesty the King appointed me as the highest ranking military commander for this war, I absolutely cannot disappoint him."

"Affirmative. I will obey your directives. But, Great Master Qin Shang, I believe it is better if we continue to hold fast. The opposing side has too many Heavy Cavalrymen. As soon as we commence war on the battlefield, I'm afraid our soldiers will be unable to resist!"

Glancing at Solskjaer's alarmed visage and rotund belly, Qin Shang's gaze displayed a trace of disdain. He faintly said, "Marshal Solskjaer, you should understand that first of all, as a soldier, you must face the enemy with courage and gaze into death with equanimity. As the commander of the entire army, if you fear battle, then how can this war be won? At the moment, I ask the Marshal to execute my orders and immediately prepare the arrangements."

Even if Solskjaer had always been arrogant in the past, he didn't dare to have even the slightest amount of disrespect for this old mage before him at this moment, especially when he saw the magic emblem upon the other's chest. He suddenly realized that the old man before his eyes could truly be counted on and hurriedly agreed, descending the city walls.

Qin Shang sighed lightly. "If we are to depend on these generals of Arcadia, then this war won't even need to break out."

"Fortunately, we're not depending on them, no?" At Qin Shang's side, with aged facial features, was a man with long, ash-grey hair draped over his shoulders. The old man brimmed with the aura of the blue sea that then turned into mulberry fields, an air of unyielding arrogance within him as he coldly spoke.

Qin Shang smiled slightly and said, "Old friend, I understand that you look down on these types of soldiers. Alas, we are currently given no leeway. If it were possible, I believe that you would have definitely been the best marshal."

Ye Li glanced at Qin Shang. With a low voice, he said, "I hope the war this time will be the prelude to the rise of our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects."

A bright radiance flashed through Qin Shang's eyes. "Definitely. What we should do is pave the road for the youth. I believe that Yin Zhu's generation will perhaps become the core strength of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects. Our dreams can finally be realized."

Ye Li turned to look at the city below. "They have come. You should go prepare. I will take my leave now." As his voice faded, his body disappeared from sight like a faint violet phantom. Watching the gradually approaching army of the Wavast Kingdom, a tinge of violet light brimming with murderous intent flitted across Qin Shang's eyes.

The one in charge of the Wavast Kingdom's army this time was the Kingdom Marshal Eastliré. The Wavast Kingdom and Milan Empire were similar in one aspect, which was that they had two marshals. One was stationed on the border between Wavast Kingdom and Florence Kingdom. When all was said and done, these two kingdoms belonged to different factions, so small conflicts were unavoidable. In addition, Eastliré currently had command of a hundred thousand troops.

Although it had been peaceful throughout the continent for several years, a person who hadn't yet experienced war only had a very small chance of becoming marshal. At present, this Marshal Eastliré was such a unique individual that filled this criteria. Since graduating from Wavast Military College, he hadn't participated in any wars, but he was a marshal at the age of 45 for one reason. His younger sister was currently the queen of the Wavast Kingdom.

When rumors of going to war against Arcadia emerged, the court councilor denounced Eastliré for immediately seizing the opportunity to wage war. Eastliré also knew that his ability was insufficient, but he was confronting Arcadia this time, the weakest and smallest country. Even without a commander, the war could be completely won. So long as he could grab this opportunity to kill Arcadian troops, who would continue to say that he was a skirt waistband marshal?¹

"Let my army pressure them. I want to battle with this Feir City and the Arcadian swine for victory." Eastliré raised his Arming sword aloft, the blade glimmering with golden light. Even though this guy had little skill, his appearance was, admittedly, very handsome. He didn't appear to be as old as a middle-aged man in his forties. Coupled with his golden helmet and gold-plated crimson battle armor, he also, to a point, possessed the awe-inspiring manner of a marshal.

An adviser beside Eastliré said, "Esteemed Marshal, we have already scouted the surroundings, and there are no signs of ambush. This time, however, Arcadia dared to provoke our Wavast Kingdom, so they must have something to back up their bold stance. Should we stop the hasty advance of the army and orchestrate a feint to first test the strength of the opposition?"

Eastliré disdainfully glanced at the war adviser beside him. "If you don't

understand, then don't speak rubbish in front of me. The Art of War has a saying, 'A good general scouts first before going to battle.' In this war, even if the enemies are weak, my reconnaissance is perfect.

"According to our intelligence reports, the enemies only assembled eighty thousand troops. The fighting capabilities of Arcadia's soldiers has always been widely known to be poor, so don't even bother mentioning how they'd fare against our hundred thousand troops. Even if we only had ten thousand Heavy Cavalry, I am sure we will be able to seize them and tear them to pieces.

"This time, I want to use an irresistible, powerful force to destroy all of Arcadia's defenses, forcing them to acknowledge that they had offended our Wavast Kingdom in the end. Have the army forge onward. The Heavy Cavalry will flank the Dragon Cavalry, and the Dragon Cavalry will be responsible for defending the mages. At the same time, the Light Cavalry will be arranged into two wing formations while the infantry brings up the rear."

Chapter 36 – The War of Arcadia (II)

That war adviser, Shawese, looked at the distant and tall walls of Feir City. He couldn't help but pucker his brows together. From a cursory glance, Eastliré seemed to be right. After all, he had graduated from the Military Academy. Regardless of the soldiers arranged into formations or the prior reconnaissance, it had all been comparatively well done. Yet, he didn't know why, but confronting this so-called desolate Arcadia made the adviser feel that something was amiss the entire time.

What he couldn't understand the most, however, was why the weak Arcadia unexpectedly dared to be unyielding against Wavast Kingdom. Unfortunately, he was a mere adviser. As a man on the verge of victory, Eastliré's brain was too muddled to manage these hundred thousand troops as they grandiosely advanced toward Feir City to pressure them.

All of the mages of the Wavast Kingdom were in custom-built war chariots and preparing to cast their magic. Facing Arcadia, which lacked mages, Eastliré firmly believed that his mages could definitely inflict heavy losses upon the enemy.

They may even directly blow the city walls to smithereens.

Like Eastliré had imagined, the assembled defenders of the Kingdom of Arcadia's Feir City didn't dare to attack, the city gates tightly closed. Eastliré looked proudly at the top of the city wall. He seemed to already see himself breaking through this strategic Arcadian border town, and the vision of the Arcadian royal family prostrating before his feet was prevalent in his thoughts.

At this moment, Eastliré suddenly realized that even though there were many Arcadian soldiers atop the city wall, only one of them was genuinely attracting his gaze—in a spotless white magic robe, his tall figure was illuminated by the sunlight as he stood at the centre of the city wall. This man had long, silver-white hair and a pure, holy aura. He did nothing but stand there, yet he still caused others to unavoidably take note of him.

"A mage? Such an old mage?" In his heart, Eastliré felt a little twitch, but he didn't care too much about it. Even if the other side had a small force of mages, it was impossible for them to produce mages that could contend against the forces he'd brought: a hundred Fire mages of ranks as high as Indigo Rank and as low as Yellow Rank.

Quickly afterward, Eastliré saw the white-robed mage materialize a zither from nothingness. Due to the huge distance, he wasn't able to clearly see the zither's appearance, but the instant the zither notes rang out, Eastliré's brain already sank into blankness.



Qin Shang's pair of crystal-clear eyes were like an abyss, but suddenly, those incomparably clear black eyes flashed with rays of light. His fingers lightly plucked the seven zither strings before him, drawing out a humming cry of voiceless consonants. A deep and resounding profoundness resided within this voiceless consonance. The haunting tune rose in spirals; in an instant, the air seemed to freeze as a dazzling violet light burst forth from between his brows. Everyone was washed over by this violet light. As one of the best on the continent as well as the sole Violet Rank Divine Music mage, Qin Shang began his performance.



“Violet Rank, how can he be Violet Rank?” Eastliré had already lost all of his graceful bearing as he shouted out in alarm. He had completely forgotten that as the marshal, his mood directly influenced his troops.

Violet Rank; this represented the peak existence on the entire continent. Apart from Milan and Blue Dias, even if the other six kingdoms only possessed a single Violet Rank individual, that person would be their absolute and greatest pride. Eastliré never expected for Arcadia to have an actual Violet Rank, and a mage at that. His entire being shuddered. Even with powerful warriors beside him, he couldn’t calm down his panicked heart.

Staring at this Violet Rank, Eastliré was not the only one panicking. This panicked mindset spread as quickly as an epidemic among the Wavast Kingdom army. What did Violet Rank symbolize? Absolutely devastating power! Any Violet Rank could reverse the outcome of war. Think of the Heavenly Empire Blue Dias and Milan Empire; although they were unable to war with one another because of their separation by Falan, they could still fight openly and maneuver covertly against each other by relying on their powerful subjects to carry out missions.

Zither music was clearly transmitted to each individual’s ears. The Wavast Kingdom army naturally didn’t know that at this moment, atop the city wall of Feir City, a tremendous amplification spell had been cast behind Qin Shang. For the purpose of today’s battle, Arcadia had prepared for a very long time. This was similar to what Ye Yin Zhu had done in Konya City to wage war against the beastmen, different yet clever tunes were played with equal skill.¹

Qin Shang didn’t need to borrow spiritual force, however, as he was a true Violet Rank. Not only that, but even if the warriors on his side were weak, their strength was still vastly superior to Ye Yin Zhu’s side when he’d confronted the beastmen. Although the Wavast Army had a crowd of a hundred thousand, compared to the near hundred Behemoths leading four great legions of beastmen, well, this discrepancy didn’t need to be justified.

“Quick, every mage attack—attack that person atop the city wall. We absolutely cannot let his magic be fully brought out.” At this crucial moment, the war adviser Shawese urgently shouted at the troops. He already couldn’t prevent himself from exceeding his place and meddling in other people’s affairs.

But accompanying his loud shout was a dazzling violet light that suddenly soared up from the ground. A person rushed out just as the Wavast Kingdom Dragon Cavalry Legion tried to surround and protect those hundred Fire mages.

The tall figure with an aged face held a longsword in his hand, one that flickered with violet light, amply demonstrating his rank. He was a warrior. What was a Violet Rank warrior? This was a person titled a Great War Master. It was compulsory for a Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander to have this strength.

Ye Li wasn't a Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander because he didn't have a dragon. This in no way influenced his strength as a Great War Master, however.

A warrior near a mage, what result would this produce? As a Violet Rank, Ye Li absolutely wouldn't allow the mages before him to have any opportunity to summon magical beasts. As for instantaneous magic, that to him would fundamentally have no effect.

His hidden emergence from below was actually very simple; prior to the Wavast Kingdom Army's approach, Feir City had already dug tunnels in the area in front of their wall, a tunnel system that couldn't be regarded as highly complex. With Ye Li's strength, he could clearly judge where the Dragon Cavalry was from their sounds even underground. His ambush target was naturally the core that the Dragon Cavalry was guarding.

When Ye Li had burst forth from underground, innumerable mages were shredded to pieces by his tyrannical Bamboo Dou Qi. The next moment, he was floating in the air, resembling a gigantic hedgehog in appearance. Countless sharp, powerful rays of violet light shot out viciously, and a fog sprung into existence.

The center of the Wavast Kingdom's hundred thousand troops became a sad and colorful display of blooming flowers. When the Bamboo Dou Qi attack swept through the hundred Fire mages, there was only one outcome: instant death.

Dying to a Violet Rank Great War Master's ambush, their deaths couldn't be considered unjustified.

Ye Li laughed loudly, as if the boredom that had slowly accumulated in his heart for ten long years had been completely vented. Facing this Wavast Army, he had no fear at all as he threw himself into the fray. His body floated in the air

and was like violet bamboo leaves, razor sharp and briefly continuous. As a violet phantom, he skewered through the enemies before heading back in the direction of Feir City.

Violet Rank Bamboo Dou Qi; shuttling through the hundred thousand troops and sweeping everything before him, even if it were the Dragon Cavalry, they were completely unable to catch his silhouette or obstruct Ye Li for even a moment.

Shawese was completely lifeless. This was the first time he had seen how frightening a powerful figure could be on the battlefield. He muttered to himself, “Taking the lives of the mages amidst an army of a hundred thousand as though he was merely plucking them out from his pocket, how strong is this Great War Master?” At this very moment, he finally realized why the Kingdom of Arcadia would suddenly become unyielding. If the acquisition of a Violet Rank Great Magister was still not enough to give them confidence, then with a Violet Rank Great War Master included, they would absolutely be a hundred percent confident.

While Shawese became lifeless and the panicking Eastliré had no clue about what to do, Qin Shang’s zither song drew glittering violet halos of light around him.

The effects of the song were beginning to fully manifest.

Far exceeding Ye Yin Zhu’s zither magic in profoundness, the results of this war were far better than when Ye Yin Zhu had faced his enemy. The war’s outcome had already been foreordained when Ye Li had flashed forward and slain the hundred Fire mages.



Ye Yin Zhu and the students of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts were being escorted by a large body of troops back to Sacred Heart City. The Autumnal Defensive War this year had already been completely finished. The beastmen that had proceeded with their crazy assault had been resolved into an all-army retreat, falling completely back to the incomparably fortified and rumored strongest stronghold on the continent—Mjolnir Stronghold.

Unexpectedly, Maldini didn’t take advantage and attack. Mjolnir was still too

fortified, and with the lack of preparation, a war between the beastmen would be described as the enemy casualties being a thousand, themselves being eight hundred. Most of all, five hundred of Maldini's prized Falcon Dragons had actually been completely wiped out, dealing an equally tremendous blow to the Milan Empire's military. To both sides, this was the best choice for the war's outcome.



Sacred Heart City, Commander's Tent.

"The matter is like this. Apart from the two Gold Behemoths that used some unknown method to take away all the Behemoths, the other forty thousand beastmen troops were completely annihilated. And as for our tamed dragons, well..." As he said this, Oliveira couldn't help but lower his head sadly.

There were currently many people within the Commander's Tent, with Prince Fisichella and Princess Xiang Luan having the highest status. Maldini sat at the head of the table, silently listening to his third grandson Oliveira's report. The Milan Empire's twenty other legion-level or higher generals along with Silver Star or higher Dragon Cavalry Commanders were all present. Of course, there was also the hero of the Battle at Konya City—Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts' first-year student Ye Yin Zhu of the Divine Music division.

Hearing his grandson's report, Maldini's expression didn't change in the slightest, but his right hand was already unconsciously gripping his wooden chair with a tight grasp.

Why wouldn't he feel distressed? The Falcon Dragons could be said to be the absolute elite that he had personally trained, playing countless critical roles on the battlefields. It could be said that every single Falcon Dragon Cavalry Knight was a hero of the Milan Empire, even possessing at least a noble title of 'Knight.' And for the first time, they were completely defeated without a single one left alive.

The Battle at Konya City, from any other perspective, was a complete victory for the Milan Empire. They had annihilated the enemy's four legions, and even more importantly, they had ruined the enemy's intended strategy. Maldini easily reasoned out why the beastmen plundering legions forced their way through

Brenner Pass. He also deeply understood what this victory meant to the Milan Empire...

Chapter 36 – The War of Arcadia (III)

But regardless of what was being said, from his own personal, emotional perspective, he was unwilling to accept this fact. He would rather the enemy’s four army legions survive if it meant that he wouldn’t lose a single Falcon Dragon Cavalry!

Maldini’s complexion inexplicably became unsettled. The atmosphere within the Commander’s tent seemed to freeze. Those high-ranking military officers close to him were aware that their esteemed generalissimo might explode violently.

Xiang Luan also felt that the mood was amiss, so she forced a smile, saying, “Generalissimo Maldini, even though our losses this time weren’t small, the beastmen’s losses were even greater. Exchanging a thousand for forty thousand elites of the enemy, this is a decisive win! When we return, I will definitely request my Imperial Father to recognize the deceased soldiers for their merits and bequeath substantial compensations to their families.”

Maldini slowly stood up. The Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander’s aura that radiated off his body appeared to be the essence of iciness. He turned to face Fisichella and Xiang Luan. Bowing, he said, “Your Highness speaks such truth. We have achieved a decisive victory this time. It can be said that this is the largest victory we have had in a confrontation with the Mjolnir beastmen. Most importantly, we crushed the enemy’s plot to raid Puglia Plains. As the true commander of this battle, Ye Yin Zhu can claim tremendous merit for himself. Even though he is a student of Milan Institution and merely a student-mage within the army, I will definitely report such great service to the Military Department; his Majesty will then bestow down his reward by decree.”

Hearing Maldini’s words, Xiang Luan and Fisichella both simultaneously

relaxed. This person was Generalissimo Ironblood. Honestly speaking, they were both somewhat afraid within their hearts. If Maldini investigated Ye Yin Zhu's sin of sending a thousand tamed dragons to their deaths, the Falcon Dragon Cavalry included, then it would be troubling.

Non-military commands were, to some extent, not accepted. As Ironblood Maldini managed the armed forces, if he were to get rid of Ye Yin Zhu in a violent rage, then Xiang Luan and Fisichella would be unable to reason with him. After all, the Violet Clan held an influential position within the Milan Empire. Emperor Silvio also held his ideas in esteem. He would absolutely not punish Maldini, a man who possessed brilliantly outstanding military service, because of a single mage.

Ye Yin Zhu sensed the somewhat disharmonious atmosphere within the Commander's tent, but he simply couldn't make head or tails of it. He never would've believed that Maldini would be unfavorable toward him. Hearing this venerable generalissimo speak about establishing his great service, he couldn't help but bashfully say, "Old horse, oh, excuse me, Generalissimo Maldini, I actually didn't do anything. If it wasn't for everyone's assistance, it would've been impossible for me to create such a good result with only my power."

At the side, the eldest grandson of the Violet Clan, Silver Star Dragon Cavalry Commander Austin, sneered, "Fortunately, you didn't do anything. Otherwise, how could you compensate for the loss of the Dragon Cavalry Legion?"

"Shut up!" Maldini explosively shouted. He scared Austin so much that his whole body trembled. This grandfather of his had released a tremendously oppressive power that made him feel as if he was suffocating.

A cold light flashed through Maldini's eyes. He said to Ye Yin Zhu, "You've done well. You deserve to be an important person to Miss Anya. With such a large disparity between us and the enemy, you miraculously defeated the opposition. Regardless of whether it is your own resourcefulness and bravery or your unusual magic, you can be considered a rising star of the young generation. However, you still sacrificed the critically important Falcon Dragon Cavalry of the Empire. This error is also not very small. Even if your service is greater, I will also report these facts to my superiors and allow his Majesty to make a decision."

Xiang Luan and Fisichella knew that they hadn't been wrong about this generalissimo. If it hadn't been Ye Yin Zhu this time, then perhaps the conclusion would've been extremely miserable. It was precisely because of Anya that the rage in Maldini's heart was forcefully suppressed.

"I wasn't thinking of rewards. I just didn't want to see the beastmen harm my friends and classmates. Generalissimo Maldini, I don't think that what I've done was wrong. Elder Brother Oliveira had said that in order to obtain victory on the battlefield, even if you must be completely unscrupulous, then do so by all means!"

"Yin Zhu..." Ye Yin Zhu's accidental speech frightened Oliveira, who was sitting to the side, extremely. He was well aware of his grandfather's temperament. Now that he had suddenly become the originator of the plan...he didn't dare to bear his grandfather's fury.

Sure enough, Maldini's gaze immediately shifted to Oliveira. He somewhat tauntingly said, "Oh, saying it like this, Oliveira's contributions also aren't small, no? Not bad not bad, a military officer of our Violet Clan finally understands the art of war. You have all done great service, great service!" As he said this, his voice suddenly changed into a bellow. "Soldier Austin, Soldier Okafur, step forward!"

Austin exchanged glances with his younger brother, and they stepped forward together, chests pushed forward.

Maldini walked until he stopped in front of Okafur. "At that time, what was the order I had given you?"

Although Okafur panicked mentally, he still stated, "You ordered me to guide a thousand Dragon Cavalry Knights to protect the students of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts and to defend Konya City."

Maldini's voice dropped even lower. "Then did you? Why did you sneak away with the Dragon Cavalry? When I had discovered your actions, you were already on the battlefield here at Sacred Heart City. In addition... Austin, as the eldest brother, not only did you not deter Okafur's actions, you even went as far as to secretly return him into the Dragon Cavalry ranks. Precisely because of your wrongs, you caused Konya City to be empty."

“Grandfather, we...” Austin just began explaining himself when Maldini cut him off.

“Shut your mouth. You should address me as Generalissimo. Pass on my commands: The brothers Austin and Okafur went absent without leave, causing my army to suffer damage. Effective immediately, these two men will be stripped of their Dragon Cavalry Commander titles and taken into custody to await trial at the Imperial Capital. Take them away.”

No one dared to plea for leniency in the face of Maldini’s fury. Out of everyone present, only Ye Yin Zhu wasn’t afraid of Maldini. He also wasn’t going to plea for their leniency, however, because he also believed that Maldini’s actions were justified. Austin’s younger brother truly did abscond of his duties.

Four strongly-built soldiers promptly entered the tent and restrained Austin and Okafur before leaving the Commander’s tent. Even though the two brothers’ strengths were at their peak, they absolutely didn’t dare to resist.

In fact, even though Maldini was in a furious rage, he was still selfish. If any other military officer had neglected his duty, he would’ve executed him long ago. What use would there be in detaining and returning them to the Imperial Capital to stand trial?

“Your Highness the Prince, your Highness the Princess, Sacred Heart City is this Empire’s frontier region and not a place your persons should stay for a long time. In a little while, I will dispatch people to escort you and the Milan students to return to the Imperial Capital at once. This will also conveniently deliver those two vile spawns to detainment. Oliveira, take these two Highnesses and Ye Yin Zhu to rest.”

Oliveira secretly released a breath of relief. He didn’t dare to look at his grandfather again and hurriedly agreed.

Upon departing the Commander’s tent, Fisichella also breathed a sigh of relief. “Generalissimo Maldini seems livid.”

Oliveira bitterly smiled and said, “Whenever grandfather gets angry, the consequences are very grave. Elder Brother, Second Brother, they have bad luck this time.”

Fisichella patted his shoulder and said, “Don’t worry, Senior. Imperial Father probably wouldn’t truly punish the Violet Clan. After all, the two Dragon Cavalry commanders had done this in order to be able to strike at the enemy. If it had been me, I’m afraid my choice would’ve been the same.”

Oliveira nodded and then turned to speak to Ye Yin Zhu. “Yin Zhu, you nearly killed me just now! I really don’t know whether your military strategy and tactics are right or wrong.”

Ye Yin Zhu was somewhat at a loss. “I harmed you, what?”

Looking at Ye Yin Zhu’s hardly affected and pure appearance, Oliveira really couldn’t say anything to him. He sighed helplessly and said, “Forget about it; it’s already over. Anyway, you really made me gain a whole new level of respect for you. How could I have expected that you would go as far as to use such an extraordinary method to force the enemy to retreat? Everyone’s perspective toward Divine Music mages really are erroneous. Who said all of you are trash? From what I see, Divine Music mages might be the most powerful mages.”

Xiang Luan and Fisichella deeply believed this was correct and nodded in agreement. In their eyes, Ye Yin Zhu was merely a Yellow Rank mage, but from the perspective of this war’s victory, who could say that Divine Music mages were useless?



And just like at the institution, Ye Yin Zhu and Sura still shared a room. Entering the door, he was welcomed by an anxiously waiting Sura. “How did things go, Yin Zhu? Maldini didn’t make things difficult for you, right?”

Ye Yin Zhu stared at him blankly, before saying, “No! Why would he make things difficult for me?”

Sura sighed in relief and explained, “That’s good. Those Falcon dragons are extremely important to the Milan Empire. This time, they were all lost. I was afraid that Maldini would be unaccepting of this sacrifice and take it out on you. Go and rest first, alright? Has your body fully recovered yet?”

Ye Yin Zhu walked over to his bed and sat down. He smiled and said, “Fortunately, yes. My spiritual force is recovering quickly. Still, it was a little

dangerous this time; those numerous and disorderly mindsets had nearly caused me to be unable to reabsorb my Spiritual Imprint. Once I fully recover, however, I think my spiritual force will progress significantly.”

“Spiritual force progressing? Is this also because of the battle?” Sura asked, slightly amazed.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and explained, “I also don’t know. I sense that my spiritual force itself is like a pool. Perhaps borrowing everyone’s spiritual force caused this pool to expand; although my spiritual force is more or less restored to normal levels by now, it still doesn’t seem to be enough to completely fill the enlarged pool. Because it’s like this, I feel that I have improved.”

Sura smiled and exclaimed, “You! Next time, don’t take risks. Mages have the greatest need to be cautious. Every kind of magical element is actually very dangerous. When used improperly, it can create a hard to control crisis. Come, wash your face.” As he said this, he placed a warm towel in Ye Yin Zhu’s hand.

Ye Yin Zhu stared at him blankly for a moment. The towel was very soft, and had a fresh and clean fragrance wafting from it. As he wiped his face, he said, “Sura, since we left Konya City, it’s like you’ve become a different person.”

Sura smilingly looked at him as he queried, “Have I? How come I don’t feel it?”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and exclaimed, “You were never this attentive to me before!”

Sura’s eyes displayed a trace of a strange light. He subconsciously glanced at the silver ring on his finger. “Didn’t you already pay me a lifetime’s worth of wages? Having already received it, I will naturally be better toward you.”

Chapter 37 – Zither Healing Behemoths (I)

Ye Yin Zhu suddenly felt his spiritual force undulate slightly. An indescribable calling, coupled with a very familiar, dear feeling had caused his spiritual force to undulate.

“It’s Zi. Zi is calling for me,” Ye Yin Zhu said in slight surprise. Could it be that Zi had met with trouble? “Sura, I need to leave right now. I should be back in two hours; don’t tell anyone else that I have disappeared.”

Not waiting for Sura to respond, a layer of milky-white radiance flashed and engulfed Ye Yin Zhu’s body, as if he had suddenly bursted with holy light. In an instant, his body was hidden by the emergence of the spotlessly white rays of light. Quickly, the brilliant rays disappeared, and when all of the light had faded into nothingness, Ye Yin Zhu’s body had also subsequently disappeared. Watching this happen, Sura was stupefied.

Brilliant rays of light flashed, and Ye Yin Zhu arrived in an unfamiliar region. The first thing his senses registered was the cold climate. Compared to Sacred Heart City, this place was significantly colder. The Divine Celestial Protection on his body, stimulated by the cold climate, emitted a layer of gentle magical energy, disconnecting his body from the cold air around him.

He was in a forest. The trees surrounding him were perfectly suited to grow in the cold forest—evergreens. When Ye Yin Zhu had transversed space, he had become disoriented. Awakening from his disorientation, a feeling of terror immediately spread throughout the rest of his body. Surrounding him were gigantic bodies; it was as if he was standing upon a hill made of these gigantic bodies. Two pairs of ice-cold, ominous eyes attentively rested upon Ye Yin Zhu’s body.

Behemoths; they were Behemoths. Two Behemoths with lustrous, glimmering gold hair stood on either side of him. Ye Yin Zhu could sense from their gazes intense killing intent and rage.

Almost immediately, Ye Yin Zhu summoned from his left hand the Moon and Tides’ Clear Brilliance Zither while Jade Silk had already been unfurled in his right

hand, transforming into a jade green loop of light that encircled his body. But under the gazes of both Gold Behemoths, he felt that he was too weak.

“Yin Zhu, don’t be nervous. They won’t harm you.” A familiar voice rang out from behind him. Ye Yin Zhu suddenly turned around, meeting Zi’s warm gaze.

“Zi, run for it! These Behemoths will hurt you.” Tremendous worry plagued Ye Yin Zhu’s heart as he quickly moved to block Zi’s body with his own.

Zi smiled slightly and clapped Ye Yin Zhu’s shoulder. He raised his head to look towards the Gold Behemoths Dis and Perkins and said, “You arrived too early. I need to speak with my younger brother.”

“Understood.” The deep voices seemed to make the air quiver. The two Gold Behemoths’ gazes were still glaring maliciously at Ye Yin Zhu, their gazes intensifying in hatred upon seeing the guqin in his hand. After a moment, the two of them slowly walked away.

“They listen to you?” Ye Yin Zhu looked at Zi in astonishment. Just now, he had unexpectedly seen the Behemoths surrounding him and had panicked, the situation making it difficult for his heart to remain serene.

Zi pointed at a rock to the side. “Sit down first; listen to me.”

Ye Yin Zhu walked over to the rock and sat down, carefully observing his surroundings. This place had an abundant amount of Behemoths. Relying on his memory, he could clearly recall that these were the Behemoths who attacked Konya City. At the moment, however, apart from the two Gold Behemoths, the remaining Behemoths were all lying down on the ground. Very many of them were even painfully groaning.

“Yin Zhu.” Zi’s voice suddenly became very cold. “Did you ever take me as your brother?”

Ye Yin Zhu blankly stared at him, before saying, “Of course I do. You are my best friend, my best brother.”

Zi angrily argued, “Then why is it that every time you run into danger, you never summon me? Don’t tell me that the Equal Life Contract we share is nothing but decoration?”

Ye Yin Zhu somewhat awkwardly replied, “No, it’s not like this. Zi, that day, the enemy I was facing was truly too powerful. There were so many Behemoths. Even if I summoned you, I was afraid that you would also...”

Zi’s gaze gradually became gentler. He sighed and said, “I know you are very fond of me and dread me receiving harm. That’s why you prefer to face these dangers on your own and never summon me. But we are brothers! Till death do us brothers part. Under the restrictions of the Equal Life Contract, do you believe that if you died, I would be alright?! I need to confess something to you. When the contract was sealed, equality was relative, not absolute. As the one who formed the contract, I drew up the contract rules. According to the rules I had drawn up then, if you die, then, through the life aura connection, I will also die. Conversely, if I die, then you will also receive severe injuries. Actually, the moment the contract was sealed, our lives were already weaved together. Even though this can make our individual life forces become exceedingly more powerful, it also restricts us at the same time. We must work together when facing any and all dangers. Do you understand?”

Ye Yin Zhu stared at him, dumbstruck. “How can this be? Zi, fortunately nothing happened this time. Otherwise, I would’ve harmed you!”

Zi said, “As long as you understand, it’s good. We must protect one another. You need to completely understand this bit. From now on, regardless of what danger you run into, you need to immediately summon me.

Ye Yin Zhu nodded. “I understand. But Zi, why are you together with these Behemoths? They don’t seem to have any enmity towards you.”

Zi unhappily said, “That day, if I didn’t forcefully use the Amethyst Sword to cut open a void and face the dangers of traversing through the chaotic streams of space to appear by your side using our spiritual connection... Don’t tell me that you believe your power really would be able to ward off the Gold Behemoths? As rank 9 magical beasts, even if Gold Behemoths are not the most powerful, their title as being unrivaled on land warfare isn’t for show. Anyway, you had done well enough that day. I heard about the situation from Dis and Perkins. You unexpectedly depended on your own power and were able to destroy the colossal beastmen legion, causing numerous Behemoths to be gravely injured. It is indeed a unimaginable feat.

“You probably have already guessed some of what I’m about to say. Right, the beastmen and I have some relations to one another. You can be at ease. From now on, I can guarantee, at the very least, your safety here. These eighty-six Behemoths will absolutely not be your enemy again.”

Ye Yin Zhu said in amazement, “Zi, don’t tell me that you can order these Behemoths around? Are you the King of Beastmen?”

Zi’s eyes flashed with an arrogant light. He shook his head and said, “No, I am not the King of Beastmen. Don’t guess. I’ll tell you the day you reach Violet Rank in strength. I will be able to tell you everything then. When that moment comes, I will need to ask you to help me. Yin Zhu, this time I summoned you because I hope that you can help me heal these Behemoths. Can you?”

Ye Yin Zhu blanked out for a moment. “Heal them?”

Zi nodded and explained, “In a war, both sides will inevitably experience casualties. I need these Behemoths to help me in the future, however, so can you help me, Yin Zhu?”

“Yes.” Ye Yin Zhu’s gaze toward Zi only held trust.

This time, it was Zi’s turn to be slightly surprised. “They were still previously your enemy, and they still want to kill you. Do you not care about that?”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “I care very much. You taught me that against whoever wanted to harm me, the best method would be to completely eradicate them from existence. But right now, they are your friends. You said that from here on out, they will no longer be my enemies. I trust you. At the same time, I also hope they will never attack Milan again in the future. I am very fond of this country.”

Zi gazed deeply at Ye Yin Zhu before nodding. He said, “Alright. I, Zi, vow here that unless Ye Yin Zhu agrees, in no way will I lead the Behemoths to threaten the Milan Empire in any way.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled faintly. “Thank you, Zi. So how will I heal them?” In fact, he was completely unaware of how important this vow of Zi’s was.

Zi said, “I remember that you once played an origin cultivation meditation song. You will need to play it three times, I presume. A Behemoth’s vitality is

extremely tenacious, but these Berserk Behemoths and Silver Behemoths had received extremely grave injuries. They need to heal their foundations as much as possible, which will allow them to bring out their own innate healing abilities. Apart from you, I can't think of anyone else who can help me."

Ye Yin Zhu smiled faintly. "I will always help you." As he said this, he withdrew the Moon and Tides' Clear Brilliance. Rays of light sparked across his hand as another guqin materialized above his knees.

Zi stared at it. The guqin resting on Ye Yin Zhu's knees was made of paulownia wood, lacquered with an ashy abatis grain pattern. The guqin was as violet as a chestnut shell, with gilded gold jade square emblems. It had a circular dragon pond and a boat-shaped phoenix pool. The seven tuning pegs below the strings were black, and its entire body was patterned like cracked snake-skin. Between those thin, cracked lines were frost patterns that broke the lacquer even more. A circle was carved at the top with the four words 'Da Sheng Yi Yin' on it.¹ Although the zither's color was dark, the zither brimmed with purity and holiness. A layer of faintly discernible light emitted from it and fused together with Ye Yin Zhu's aura, giving people a one-of-a-kind extraordinary feeling.

"Yin Zhu, you have recovered your zithers?" Zi stated, pleasantly surprised.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and said, "Yes! My luck is pretty good, as everything was returned. Unfortunately, in order to handle the beastmen, I was forced to absorb a tremendous amount of spiritual force and was thus unable to steadily control the power. It led to the seven dragon tendon strings of the Withered Wood, Dragon's Roar Zither snapping. How can our Zither Sect's guqin be used again after this?"

Zi's eyes displayed a faintly discernible pondering light. "Seven dragon tendons?"

Ye Yin Zhu didn't pay attention to Zi's ponderings. Both his hands caressed the strings for a moment before his body and mind completely melded with the zither, his heartstrings resonating with the zither strings. Talking to himself, he said, "This is Da Sheng Yi Yin Zither. Wood of Yi Yang,² and material of Kong Sang.³ The phoenix cries to the autumn moon; the crane dances atop a terrace of jade. Within this guqin, the nine heralded virtues fuse together perfectly,

continuously pushing Da Sheng Yi Yin to greater heights. Hence, he had also decided that this zither is the best choice to play songs that produce healing effects.”

Zi asked in awe, “Perfect fusion of the nine virtues?”

Chapter 37 – Zither Healing Behemoths (II)

Ye Yin Zhu’s hands lightly brushed the zither strings. Immediately, a rich, penetrating, ancient, and profound zither melody rang out. “The nine virtues of the zither, ‘strange,’ ‘profound,’ ‘penetrating,’ ‘smooth,’ ‘tranquil,’ ‘circular,’ ‘even,’ ‘clear,’ and ‘fragrant.’ The Da Sheng Yi Yin Zither is a guqin of the rarest quality, one that can give rise to these nine beautiful tones. This zither’s defining characteristic is embodied in one word: ‘balance.’”

His left hand played the main melody, fingers scooping the strings upwards in the Turtledove Summons the Rain gesture. His right hand played the accompaniment, the middle finger touching the string with the Deep Valley, Momentum Transfer gesture. These notes melded together and rose, becoming an exquisite, mysterious zither melody that weaved through the air. His fingers, calm and collected, controlled the tune with a light, leisurely playing, a play that was styled with heavy, quick movements to contrast. The gentle and deep melody resonated vividly and thoroughly with the nine virtues of the zither.

The Behemoths lying on the ground stopped groaning when the soft zither song echoed through the air. Two pairs of large, vacant eyes gradually opened. They were finally able to see a white-robed, black-haired youth. That gentle, rich melody roused the most primal life force within their bodies. This tremendous vitality only belonged to the Behemoths. It seemed as if even the elemental magic within the air was moving rhythmically along to the gradually maturing and evolving melody.

Zi stood behind Ye Yin Zhu. At this moment, his manner was exactly the same as when Ye Yin Zhu played the zither as a child: motionless, listening with rapt attention, and enjoying the zither music that Ye Yin Zhu was gifting him in its entirety.

Dis and Perkins had returned at an unknown time to the forest. The two Gold Behemoths were sitting on the ground, dumbfounded, their gazes resting on Ye Yin Zhu. Only now did the ominous glint within their eyes gradually weaken. Their large heads were, somewhat ridiculously, swaying softly to the rhythm of << Origin Cultivation Meditation Song >>.

Whenever Ye Yin Zhu played the zither, his heart would be cleansed again and again. This was his Pure Zither Heart that had been cultivated for sixteen years and was now blending into the << Origin Cultivation Meditation Song >>—a comparatively long zither song. When all three renditions of the << Origin Cultivation Meditation Song >> ended, half an hour had already passed.

As the last note lingered in the air with a memorable stylishness before dying out, he rested both hands against the strings. Ye Yin Zhu felt that his soul and spirit had been refreshed. His originally chaotic spiritual force was now completely restored and at equilibrium. Because he had used up too much of it last time, it had befuddled his mind, but now that dazed feeling was completely cleared. Although his spiritual ocean became larger, it was now completely refilled and clear of all impurities. When others listened to his zither song, it would become incessantly more influential. When he played for himself, the same enhancement would also occur.

Opening his eyes, Ye Yin Zhu couldn't help but be intimidated by the scene before him. The eighty something originally unsteady and leaning from side to side Behemoths had sat up some time ago. Even if their gigantic bodies were seated on the ground, they were still significantly taller than Ye Yin Zhu. Each and every one had a dim-witted appearance while staring at Ye Yin Zhu. Their former killing intent seemed to have already faded away completely. These purportedly unrivaled on land warfare Behemoths were now, unexpectedly, giving others a charmingly naive feeling.

Dis had seemingly already forgotten that the youth before him had once sent him into a terrifying rage. His head slowly leaned closer as he complimented him. "Extremely beautiful. It sounds so soothing; it's as if the side effects from my berserk transformation has completely disappeared. Can you please play it one more time?"

Seeing Dis and the other Behemoths' large eyes brim with longing, Ye Yin Zhu chuckled softly and didn't reply. His eight fingers once more began to weave a song. The Da Sheng Yi Yin Zither once again echoed with another << Origin Cultivation Meditation Song >>. As he began playing this zither song once more, a fantastic scene suddenly manifested in this evergreen forest.

Behemoths of at least fifteen meters tall began to unexpectedly sway along to the zither melody, appearing somewhat ridiculous. At this moment, their ferocity and toughness were nowhere to be seen. Ye Yin Zhu was like their conductor; using the zither music, he directed them into performing these silly actions.

A faint halo of violet light appeared around Zi's body. He naturally didn't stop Ye Yin Zhu from playing a fourth rendition. This enjoyable activity was the true reason why he had stayed in the Desolate Jade Sea for ten years! Even the patriarch of the Zither Sect, Qin Shang, absolutely couldn't have imagined that the Pure Zither Heart would have such an extremely unusual effect on beastmen.

A golden radiance shrouded Dis and Perkin's bodies while a silver radiance shrouded the Silver Behemoths' bodies, and an iron-gray radiance even shrouded the Berserk Behemoths' bodies. All kinds of magical elements in the air began to enter their bodies because of the << Origin Cultivation Meditation Song >>, giving rise to this mysterious effect.

The fourth rendition ended. The amount of spiritual force Ye Yin Zhu expended as he cast zither magic through four renditions of << Origin Cultivation Meditation Song >> wasn't a small amount. After all, this wasn't like his performances at Floating Orchid Pavilion; this time, he was wholeheartedly pouring his spiritual force into the melody. Although his spirit was greatly refined after he finished playing, his complexion had already become slightly pale.

The Behemoths' eyes still brimmed with a hopeful light. Like a herd of insatiable children, they cast miserable looks at Ye Yin Zhu.

"Enough." Zi didn't wait for the Gold Behemoth to speak and walked up from behind Ye Yin Zhu.

Zi coldly stated, "From now on, you must remember that Ye Yin Zhu is my brother. How you treat me is how you will treat him. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Amethyst Emperor." The eighty-six Behemoths simultaneously roared

with deafening voices, nearly toppling over Ye Yin Zhu from his seated position on the ground. Upon hearing these Behemoths reply to Zi, he couldn't help but be even more amazed.

At this moment, the Behemoths turned towards him. "Paying respect to Zither Emperor."

Ye Yin Zhu didn't know whether to laugh or cry as he stared at these giants. "Zi, why are they adding on the title 'Emperor?'"

Zi smiled and said, "This is their acknowledgement of you. Your zither music has already conquered them. I believe that any beastmen will like your beautiful zither music. Of course, that's so long as you aren't inciting berserk dragons into attacking them."

Ye Yin Zhu somewhat awkwardly said, "They told you?"

Zi nodded and said, "If an opportunity comes up, I also want to hear the song you used to annihilate them earlier. It's hard to imagine you playing such a tyrannical song with your character."

After hearing Zi say this, Ye Yin Zhu couldn't help but recall what happened at Konya City. He thought about how he seemed to be unable to control his own mind at that time.

Ye Yin Zhu definitely wasn't the most powerful Divine Music mage on the Longinus Continent. He couldn't even be considered within the top ten. He was, however, a unique and unmatched Divine Music mage because of his Pure Zither heart. Even his teacher, Qin Shang, couldn't compare with this. He was slowly discovering the peculiarities of the Pure Zither Heart on his own. After all, he was the first successful cultivator of it.

Once again clasping Ye Yin Zhu's shoulder, Zi said, "You should go back. Yin Zhu, remember what I said. Regardless of what danger you run into later on, summon me. Let us brothers face the danger together. Furthermore, don't tell anyone about what happened just now."

Ye Yin Zhu nodded, somewhat unwilling to leave, and glanced at Zi. Quietly, the spiritual force of the contract connection began to fluctuate within his soul. Accompanied by milky-white rays of light, his body silently fused together with

Zi's.

Within Ye Yin Zhu's heart, he had always looked upon Zi as his elder brother. His Pure Zither Heart's response to the outside world was exceedingly acute. Although his character was pure, he only needed the simplest of interactions with the other to accurately judge if the other would be good or bad toward him. This was why he hadn't blamed Sura when he learned that he was the thief from back then. Sura was sincere toward him; otherwise, even if he was being generous again, how could he gift away a treasure that was nearly a divine device?

It was the same with Zi. Even though his father had once warned him that Zi was very mysterious, he clearly sensed that Zi didn't have any harmful intentions toward him. At the same time, Ye Yin Zhu could also faintly sense that the relationship between him and Zi was related to the ten years of zither playing they shared together.



In a brilliant flash of light, Ye Yin Zhu returned to his room in Sacred Heart City. His sudden reappearance scared Sura into jumping back.

"Ah! You returned. Yin Zhu, you just..." Sura bewilderingly and troublingly looked at him.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't lie to Sura. "Do you remember me summoning Zi to help me fight Nesta during the competition? Zi is my best friend, and the Equal Life Contract between us allows us to summon each other for help. Just a moment ago, Zi summoned me to help him."

"Zi?" Hearing this name, Sura couldn't help recalling the tall figure from that time—the proud, aloof, and vigorous violet-haired man. Remembering his appearance, Sura couldn't help but think of those last moments atop the city walls of Konya City. At that time, Ye Yin Zhu was undoubtedly defenseless atop the city wall, yet he was miraculously still alive. All the Behemoths had also immediately retreated. Could all of this be merely a coincidence? He remembered that a burst of violet light had been shining atop the city wall at that time.

"Yin Zhu, this friend you call Zi, is he very strong?" Sura asked.

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Zi is very powerful, but when all’s said and done, I don’t know how powerful he is. I can only sense that his strength is tremendous. Sura, I’m little tired and will turn in early after a moment.”

Seeing Ye Yin Zhu enter a meditative state, Sura didn’t continue asking questions. In the depths of his mind, however, many questions lingered.



Generalissimo Maldini’s efficiency was really remarkable. By dawn the next day, a thousand Dragon Cavalry Knights and three thousand Light Cavalry—altogether four thousand troops—escorted the hundred Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts students and left Sacred Heart City. He didn’t want the Princess and Prince to continue staying here.

On the return trip, due to their identities, Xiang Luan, Fisichella, and Hai Yang rode together in a carriage. Ye Yin Zhu, Sura, and the other students rode in the other carriages.

A dozen or more days passed during this truly dry-as-dust journey. Every day, Ye Yin Zhu would face endless questions from the mages. Perhaps it was because he’d made the dragons explode that day, but the warriors showed respect from a distance. The mages, however, didn’t do the same.

What a mage longed for most was magical power. They wanted to be just like Ye Yin Zhu. Ye Yin Zhu eliminated a few beastmen legions all at once with powerful zither magic—why wouldn’t they be interested? Therefore, Ye Yin Zhu would hear the same questions every day.

Chapter 37 – Zither Healing Behemoths (III)

“Yin Zhu, tell me—do I still have the opportunity to change disciplines and become a Divine Music mage?”

“I’m afraid that’s not possible as your age is too high. A Divine Music mage needs to cultivate from childhood. Moreover, are you willing to abandon all of your current magic cultivation? My Grandfather Qin once said that any magic discipline, if cultivated properly, can become first-rate without much difference in strength among the different disciplines. It’s still better if you continue to

practice your own magic, okay?”

Finally, Milan City could be seen in the distance. Xiang Luan transmitted an order and had the procession temporarily stop to rest. Under the protection of the Milan Empire’s soldiers, Xiang Luan ordered the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts students to gather together.

Xiang Luan glanced at Ye Yin Zhu standing at the very front and then smiled slightly, saying, “Everyone, I have gathered you here for a specific matter. At Konya City, you have all demonstrated very remarkable performances. Through everyone’s collaboration, the beastmen were unable to pass through Brenner Pass. You have saved the Empire’s Puglia Plains. You are all heroes of Milan. We’re heading straight back to Milan City. Everyone, rest assured, Fisichella and I will certainly report to our Imperial Father of your contributions, and he will evaluate your merits and bestow rewards accordingly.”

After she said these words, her audience immediately cheered. These students, for the most part, were twenty-year-old youths. Many of them came from a noble clan. To them, being praised by the Imperial Princess was the highest honor they could receive. Not to mention, their merits would later be evaluated, their rewards allocated. To be able to receive such acclaim while still in school—when they graduate, regardless of whether they joined the army or some other organization, this halo would forever follow them.

Xiang Luan raised her hands, and everyone quieted immediately.

“Everyone’s contributions won’t be small. Right now, however, Xiang Luan has something she requests everyone’s help for. Since Fisichella and I are attending the institution to study, we don’t want any special treatment. We hope that we can be just like any regular student, striving to gain more and more knowledge. Because of the importance of this battle, our identities have been revealed. This secret, however, I hope everyone can guard for us. When we return to the institution later, our identities will be just like it originally was. We will be just like all of you—simply another student of Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.”

“I, Nesta, swear upon my honor as a Heavy Cavalry Knight to guard your secrets and shall in no way divulge them.” Nesta held his dragonspear high, his

resoundingly powerful voice amply displaying how serious his promise was to them.

Quite a few students reacted straightaway. Some of them even regretted that they weren't the ones to speak up first. Who didn't want to leave behind a good impression upon the future emperor of the Empire?! For a moment, vows resounded out, one after the other. Only Ye Yin Zhu and Sura didn't utter a word.

Rolande finally saw a chance and grabbed it. "Ye Yin Zhu, you're not swearing an oath to guard the secret; don't tell me you plan to divulge the Princess and Prince's identities upon returning?"

Ye Yin Zhu said, "Swearing an oath is merely a formality. I promised, so I definitely will not divulge their identities; there's no need to bother with anything more."

Sura nodded, succinctly stating, "I as well."

Xiang Luan smiled faintly and said, "I trust everyone here. Well, everyone may go rest now. When we resume our journey later, we will be heading straight home."

"Yin Zhu." Ye Yin Zhu had pulled Sura to the side with the intention of resting, only to suddenly sense someone tug at his clothes. He turned his head to take a look and caught sight of Ma Liang, who was signalling him with his eyes. "Let's go to the side and talk."

"Okay." Ye Yin Zhu spoke a few words to Sura before immediately following Ma Liang away from the main road to an area empty of people, sitting down beside him.

"Ma Liang, what did you seek me out for?" Ye Yin Zhu inquisitively asked.

Ma Liang scanned their surroundings, making sure no one was paying attention to him. He lowered his voice and said, "Yin Zhu, you have done a great service for the Milan Empire this time. When we return to Milan City, the Emperor of the Milan Empire will definitely bestow a magnanimous reward upon you. You must remember that if he offers you citizenship to join the Milan Empire, you must agree."

“Why? I am a citizen of the Kingdom of Arcadia. Why must I join the Milan Empire? In order to receive more rewards?” Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes displayed a slightly dissatisfied light.

An intense light flashed through Ma Liang’s eyes. “Yin Zhu, to our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects, this might be our chance. As a member of the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects, you yourself do not belong to any country on this continent. Any citizenship is meaningless to us. I believe that if you agree to Milan citizenship, you can obtain a fiefdom from all of your established contributions this time.”

Ye Yin Zhu knitted his brows together and said, “I somewhat don’t understand. Why doesn’t our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects belong to any country?”

Ma Liang hesitated slightly, but he still shook his head and said, “Since your teacher hasn’t told you, I still can’t say much. I can only say that our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects need to genuinely be considered its own nation. Although our four magic sects of Zither, Chess, Calligraphy, and Painting are highly skilled, the number of members we have are rather low. Because our magic cultivation requires an extremely high innate skill, only the gifted who have inherited the sect’s secrets and treasures can truly inherit the magic of our four sects. Therefore, over the past several years, although the bloodlines have basically continued, none of the four sect Patriarchs are exceptionally strong. Meanwhile, the four martial arts sects of Plum, Orchid, Bamboo, and Chrysanthemum have numerous cultivators.

“At this moment, our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects are forced to hide and live a life of secrecy. If you can receive a territory from the most powerful country on the continent, then even if it is a small territory, it will allow us to restore ourselves!”

Ye Yin Zhu pensively commented, “So you mean our Eight Eastern Dragon Sects cannot belong to any country.”

Nodding his head, Ma Liang gazed profoundly at Ye Yin Zhu. He suddenly realized that this heir of the Zither Sect apparently wasn’t as simple as he appeared.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled slightly and said, “Alright then.” After he said this, he got up and walked over to Sura.

Ma Liang didn't realize that Ye Yin Zhu's countenance became a little more lonely and a little more resolute. Since he had left the Desolate Jade Sea, Ye Yin Zhu hadn't felt any unease toward anything at first. Upon entering society, however, he had begun to understand more and more about the outside world over the past months. He gradually discovered that his understanding of things was truly too low. It seemed like everyone had their own secrets. The continent also had many strange things that he contrarily didn't know.

This emptiness in his brain made Ye Yin Zhu's heart feel uneasy. At the moment, he was brimming with a thirst for knowledge of the entire continent. When he had turned and left, he already secretly decided that upon returning to the institution, he would quickly use his time to blend into society and learn all he needed to know. Although his sixteen-year-old Pure Zither Heart had helped him a lot, it had also equally deprived him of much. It was now time for him to take back those things he had missed.

When everyone set off on the journey once more and were on the verge of reaching Milan City, the decree of Emperor Silvio of the Milan Empire had already been handed down. He ordered for Imperial Princess Xiang Luan and Imperial Prince Fisichella, as well as Oliveira and Ye Yin Zhu, to immediately enter the emperor's palace. The rest of the students of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts were to return to the institution as originally planned.



With a squad of Dragon Cavalry Knights guarding them, Ye Yin Zhu and the others entered Milan City and headed straight for the imperial palace at the heart of the city.

Within the carriage.

Fisichella glanced at the tranquil Ye Yin Zhu beside him, asking in bafflement, "Idol, aren't you a little nervous?"

Ye Yin Zhu puzzledly asked, "Why would I be nervous?"

Fisichella laughed in disbelief before saying, "This time, you have obtained great merit. Imperial Father still doesn't know what to bestow you, yet you aren't even slightly expectant. Idol really is Idol and looks at fame and profit as if they are dung!"

Ye Yin Zhu unhappily said, “How many times have I said this? Don’t call me Idol.”

Xiang Luan covered her mouth and lightly laughed. She said, “Our Divine Music division’s young shota isn’t that easy to bribe. I’m guessing that Imperial Father will definitely bestow upon him some official rank or order of feudal nobility. But the reward probably won’t be too big. After all, the loss of five hundred Falcon Dragons will possibly drive Imperial Father mad with rage.”

Oliveira, slightly worried, said, “I don’t know how His Majesty will handle my two older brothers. Your Highness the Princess, your Highness the Prince, when that moment comes, I beseech...”

Fisichella clapped Oliveira’s shoulder and said, “Don’t worry, Senior. Your Violet Clan is the pillar of the Empire. With Imperial Father’s astuteness, he is unlikely to make things very difficult for them.”

The Milan Empire’s Imperial Palace could be described as the most distinctive of all the eight countries on the continent. The main building was constructed from red, black, and white materials. Not only did it have a vast, imposing loftiness, it also had an even greater, one-of-a-kind tyrannical aggressiveness.

The interior of the palace was spacious, its area equivalent to a quarter of the city outside. The Royal Family stationed five thousand Imperial Guards all year round to defend the palace. These Imperial Guards were as strong as the clouds were high. The palace’s interior defensive magical formations had been built upon and maintained by several strong mages, so much so that it could resist a bombardment of Violet Rank Forbidden Incantations. This ensured that the defense of the Milan Inner Palace was like an iron wall. It was said to match the strength of Dragon City.

The Dragon Cavalry Squad escorted Ye Yin Zhu and the other three to the entrance of the Imperial Palace, where their protection duties were immediately transferred to the Imperial Guards. As the Princess and Prince were riding in the carriage, the four of them didn’t need to get off and rode straight to the Imperial Palace’s Inner Court. Their carriage was stopped by a crowd of Imperial Officials who were discussing official business within the main hall of the Imperial Milan Palace.

As soon as they descended the carriage, Ye Yin Zhu couldn't help but be stunned by the scene in front of him. The Milan Imperial Palace's main hall was symbolic of the entire Milan Empire. Red and black arrowed flags fluttered in the wind. The main hall's ceiling surpassed an elevation of thirty meters and had delicately carved, yet thick, solid veranda pillars supporting its weight. At the center of the main hall's ceiling was the Milan Royal Family's Ruby Cross Shield Emblem, enlarged an uncountable number of times. It sparkled with light, its luster like a ruby's.

Standing in the front of this palace hall were twenty Golden Warhammer Warriors. These warriors exceeded two meters in height, and within their hands were long-handled warhammers. The external weight of those hammers seemed astonishing. Fisichella quietly told Ye Yin Zhu that these Golden Warhammer Warriors all had Indigo Rank strength. Even if there weren't many of them, they were absolutely the elites of elites among the Imperial Palace Guards.

"Come on, let's go in." Xiang Luan nodded to Ye Yin Zhu. Fisichella walked in front, leading Oliveira and Ye Yin Zhu into the Supreme Executive Official Residence of the Milan Empire.

The Milan Imperial Palace's main hall was internally decorated with gold and jade in glorious splendor. These innumerable, dazzling artifacts made Ye Yin Zhu feel as if there was too much for the eyes to take in. The ambiance here was somewhat low, however, which made it difficult for him to adapt to the environment.

On both sides of the main hall were Golden Warhammer Warriors stationed at five meter intervals from one another. Numerous court officials were lined up in front of the Golden Warhammer Warriors. From their attire, he could see that the civil court officials were positioned to the left. Other officials were ranked in accordance to rank, the highest, the generals, to the very right.

Chapter 38 – Molesting the Princess (I)

Turning to look at the very front, Ye Yin Zhu couldn't help but blank out for a moment. Sitting tall in the Milan Emperor's throne was a man, obviously the Heavenly Emperor Berlusconi Silvio of the Milan Empire. What amazed Ye Yin Zhu, however, was that this Emperor Silvio's majestic appearance was extremely different from his two children. Height-wise, he was significantly shorter than Xiang Luan, and there wasn't a need to mention Fisichella whose height exceeded two meters. His appearance was average, but the faint smile on his face this entire time gave off the feeling that he was more like an amiable, neighboring uncle and not the Emperor of the strongest empire on the Longinus Continent.

While Ye Yin Zhu was letting his imagination run wild, Xiang Luan and Fisichella had already stopped in front of him. As royalty, they didn't need to perform any large etiquette to signify respect. They both bowed together and said, "Respects to Imperial Father."

"Eh..." When Xiang Luan bowed to her father, she suddenly felt someone bump into her raised bottom. She was already bent over, and since she didn't have a strong warrior's body and core muscles, she immediately cried out in surprise as her body fell forward.

As it turned out, because Ye Yin Zhu's consciousness had fled him, he was still walking forward even though Xiang Luan and Fisichella had stopped. As he was walking behind Xiang Luan, he naturally bumped into her. Unfortunately, his timing was terrible as he happened to bump into her just when Xiang Luan was bowing, her bottom thus raised up.

Soft, squishy, everything was close to perfect. This was the first time Ye Yin Zhu felt such an intense warmth flow through him, striking his brain faster than lightning.

Hearing Xiang Luan shout, Ye Yin Zhu immediately reached out in a subconscious reaction. Stretching his right hand forward, he very easily slid it under Xiang Luan's arms and pulled her back.

“Ah——” Xiang Luan cried out again. She first thought she was going to fall, yet she suddenly fell into an encompassing, warm embrace instead. At the same time, what made her even more shocked was the four-fingered hand firmly grasping her soft, ample chest. It actually dragged her deeper into the embrace. In an instant, Xiang Luan nearly swooned. One must know that this was the place with the highest authority in the Milan Empire! Her father, the Imperial Emperor, was also watching.

Ye Yin Zhu, who was hugging Xiang Luan, also reacted and quickly said, “I’m sorry! I’m sorry, Senior Xiang Luan. I didn’t notice that you had stopped.”

After a brief moment, about five seconds of silence, the entire Milan main palace hall suddenly became tumultuous.

What kind of behavior was this? To exhibit such disrespect to the princess in front of the Emperor and court officials of the Milan Empire? This might be the first time such a thing happened in the history of the Longinus Continent.

The smile on Emperor Silvio’s face stiffened completely, his mouth was even slightly twitching. Fisichella, standing next to Xiang Luan, stared with his mouth agape. His mouth was so wide that it could even fit a watermelon. Oliveira closed his eyes as two words came to mind: Oh no.

“Golden Warhammer Warriors, why have you not seized this crackpot?” One of the generals standing on the right side angrily exclaimed with an aged, deep voice. He had the nerve to give an order on Milan’s Heavenly Emperor Silvio’s behalf; it was evident how noble his position was in the Milan Empire.

This was not just anybody; he was the other Violet Star Dragon Cavalry Commander, Generalissimo Seedorf of the Empire. At the same time, he was also Hai Yang’s grandfather. With regards to his clan’s influence, although Seedorf could not compare to Maldini, he, however, was recognised as the strongest in the Milan Empire. Violet Rank Level 6 strength in addition to a rank 9 Silver Dragon, he was known to be invincible and unparalleled throughout the entire continent if Falan was not taken into account. As such, his position in the Milan Empire was extremely high.

In nearly the blink of an eye, four figures already encircled Ye Yin Zhu and Xiang Luan. Four huge, golden warhammers were aimed at Ye Yin Zhu, indigo dou qi

forming an aura three meters in diameter. It locked onto Ye Yin Zhu's body, causing him to not even dare to slightly move.

Xiang Luan, by now, had woken up from her daze and hurriedly said, "Release me this instant."

Ye Yin Zhu bitterly smiled as he said, "Senior, it's not like I don't want to let go, but it's because I am unable to do so." In front of the immense pressure of four Indigo Rank warriors, he really was unable to move even a hairsbreadth. After all, be it dou qi or magic, there was a huge disparity between him and Indigo Rank.

Xiang Luan immediately reacted to this revelation. She angrily shouted toward the Golden Warhammer Warriors, "Withdraw! Do you all still think my humiliation insufficient?"

The princess' command and the scene before them made the four Golden Warhammer Warriors come to a realization. Although they didn't withdraw, they immediately relaxed the pressure on Ye Yin Zhu. Only then was Ye Yin Zhu able to withdraw his hand and release Xiang Luan from his embrace. He murmured softly, "Senior, although your pectoral muscles feel very squishy, they are also very soft!"

Xiang Luan almost puked out blood. Although Ye Yin Zhu's voice was quiet, the vast majority of those around them were powerful individuals, and the amount of people able to hear his words were by no means small. Xiang Luan really wanted to shout, I don't want to live anymore!

All of the generals' faces were twitching. Many people wanted to laugh but did not dare to do so. Each and every one of them could only hold it back with extreme difficulty.

Emperor Silvio's complexion turned green, and then white as he stared down at Ye Yin Zhu and his two children. Since the group had entered the hall, Ye Yin Zhu attracted his attention. A spotlessly white magic robe, long black hair, handsome face, and an elegant, noble temperament—with just these traits, Ye Yin Zhu seemed as if he were a noble magician of the highest order. His later actions, however, were too atrocious—molesting the princess, or in a more apt description, molesting his own daughter in front of him. This boy, could he actually be this extremely daring?

Silvio quickly dispelled this idea. This was because he was able to see the depth of clarity in Ye Yin Zhu's black eyes. Eyes were the windows to one's soul. Even in a disguise, the eyes could easily betray one's innate nature. Silvio didn't see a single trace of lascivious, nefarious, or even immoral emotion within Ye Yin Zhu's eyes. Although there was some confusion within them, he clearly appeared to have not done it on purpose.

"Imperial Father." Xiang Luan knelt down. Pu-tong. She knew that if her father were to blame him now, then Ye Yin Zhu would no longer have a chance. After all, just for lacking manners in front of so many important civil and military figures, he already couldn't be forgiven. "This is the first time Yin Zhu has been in the palace. He is not familiar with the environment here; I believe he has not done this intentionally."

"Did you not already lose enough of my face? Go with your younger brother and stand to the side." Silvio finally spoke up. Although his voice was cold, his stiff face was gradually easing.

Oliveira, who was standing next to Ye Yin Zhu, gently tugged on his clothes, motioning for him to kneel as well. However, Ye Yin Zhu did not comprehend his meaning and continued to stand. Since Xiang Luan and Fisichella had withdrawn to the side, his actions became even more eye-catching.

Silvio indifferently looked at Ye Yin Zhu and said: "Why are you not kneeling in front of this Emperor?"

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and replied, "I cannot kneel. Grandpa taught me, 'Kneel to the heavens, kneel to the earth, and kneel to my parents. Otherwise, do not kneel. A man kneeling is the same as gold.'" ¹

Unlike what most imagined, Silvio did not get angry; instead, he curiously inquired, "Is it because I am not your motherland monarch? If you met the king of Arcadia, would you kneel to him?" With regards to Ye Yin Zhu's origins, he had inquired about them long ago.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head in reply. "I will not kneel."

Silvio's eyes flashed with a cold light. "Good, you are indeed courageous and insightful. It's no wonder you had the strength to resist the foreign enemies at Konya City. You really gave me several surprises. It wasn't just some nice

surprises, as there were plenty of shocking ones as well. Ye Yin Zhu, do you know that because of your conducts and deeds, you caused the Milan Empire to lose its most important military branch, the Falcon Dragon Cavalry?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, “I have already heard that this military branch was pretty important.”

Silvio asked softly, “Then what you did was intentional?”

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and replied, “No, I did not notice their arrival. At that time, I just wanted to finish my zither song. They just appeared out of nowhere and was thus affected by my zither playing. My original target was only those five hundred tamed dragon.”

Suddenly, Seedorf interrupted from the side. “So Maldini should not have sent people to save you then?”

Replying, Ye Yin Zhu said, “No. If the Falcon Dragon Cavalry had not fallen from the sky, the enemy could’ve broken through Konya City since the deaths of those original tamed dragons weren’t able to genuinely harm the Behemoths. The Falcon Dragon Cavalry inflicted heavy losses upon the Behemoths.”

Seedorf continued to investigate in detail. “Then where were those severely injured Behemoths? Moreover, if the sacrifice of five hundred Falcon Dragon Cavalry could annihilate a hundred Behemoths, that would be considered a miracle.”

Ye Yin Zhu knew where the Behemoths were; they were with Zi! He could not say that, however. Thus, he told his first lie. “I don’t know.”

Silvio slowly rose from his throne, towering above Ye Yin Zhu as he said, “The Battle of Konya City resulted in the annihilation of four beastmen legions in addition to preventing the success of the beastmen’s plot. This Empire’s Puglia Plains avoided the fate of being pillaged. Those who fought in this battle are all heroes of the Empire. Xiang Luan, Fisichella, at this pivotal moment, you could not give up territory of the Empire. As members of the royal family, you did not cower. You bravely fought to the end. You are worthy of belonging to the Berlusconi Clan. As your father, I am very proud.

“By my decree, those who fought in this battle shall all be anointed as Knights,

and those present Knights of the Dragon Cavalry shall be conferred an additional title of Officer Knight. Each person shall be given five hundred gold coins as well. The forty students of the Magic Department of the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, excluding Ye Yin Zhu and Xiang Luan, will be bestowed Baronry. Each of them will be rewarded a thousand gold coins.”

Although Silvio’s smile had reappeared on his face at this moment, he stood there with his short stature with a manner of a ruler looking disdainfully out of the corner of his eye over his entire realm. Ye Yin Zhu sensed a kind of personality of ‘standing out from the masses’ from him.

Seedorf, who was in charged of the military, bowed and said, “As you bid.”

Silvio’s gaze then fell upon Ye Yin Zhu’s body once more, “As for you, you really have placed me in a difficult position.”

“Why is that?” Ye Yin Zhu asked curiously.

Chapter 38 – Molesting the Princess (II)

Silvio spoke with a deep voice. “You truly aren’t willing to kneel to me?”

Ye Yin Zhu resolutely nodded. His two grandfathers’ teachings were creeds he upheld in his heart. Previously, in the Desolate Jade Sea, he hadn’t studied many things, but every little bit he learned, he firmly remembered.

Xiang Luan secretly thought, Oh no! She cursed herself for actually forgetting to teach Ye Yin Zhu a few necessary etiquette customs before entering the imperial palace.

Silvio slowly nodded, his gaze toward Ye Yin Zhu becoming increasingly glacial. His threatening, imposing manner made people unable to breathe. Ye Yin Zhu was still looking at the Emperor with a tranquil face, however, his crystal-clear eyes rippleless, without a single trace of anxiety or unease.

“Imperial Father, Yin Zhu is inexperienced. He does not understand many things; please excuse his offense of lacking manners.” Xiang Luan hurriedly spoke up.

Fisichella also hastily said, “Imperial Father, luckily there was Ye Yin Zhu this

time. Otherwise, we might not have returned. You...”

“Enough. Who allowed you to talk?” Silvio’s voice was as cold as the winter’s snow.

At this, everyone believed that this Heavenly Emperor was on the verge of exploding, but suddenly, the austerity of Silvio’s face thawed. The corners of his mouth exposed traces of a ruminating smile. “The Milan Empire has always given well-defined rewards and punishments. Meritorious service must be bestowed a proper reward, and offenses must be equally punished. Ye Yin Zhu, during the battle of Konya City, claimed the greatest credit. He is the hero of the Empire. This is unquestionable. He has also dealt the Empire’s Falcon Dragon Cavalry elites a tremendous loss, however; and he has also molested the princess within the main hall of the Milan Imperial Palace. Such an offense should be punished severely, but his achievements are greater. All his offenses are offset by his contribution, so there will be no punishment.”

Hearing Emperor Silvio say these words, the sibling pair, Xiang Luan and Fisichella, released sighs of relief.

Silvio turned toward Ye Yin Zhu and said, “Your contributions significantly counteract your offenses. But this Emperor still wants to reward you. By my decree, since Ye Yin Zhu has the power to ward off the beastmen and guard this country’s territory, I especially bestow upon him Milan Empire citizenship which will exist jointly with his original Arcadian nationality. I confer upon him the title of Viscount. As for his feudal fiefdom...”

Hearing the two words ‘feudal fiefdom,’ Ye Yin Zhu took note of this and looked up to see Silvio’s gaze unwillingly shift away.

“You have erred too greatly and still need to temper yourself. Originally, I wanted to bestow a fertile feudal fiefdom, but it seems too hasty now. The city you have defended, Konya City, will be bestowed to you. Brenner Pass will be subject to your administration. Of course, I hope you don’t abandon your studies at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts as a result of this.”

“Imperial Father, this is not fair,” Xiang Luan objected. Konya City had a total population of twenty thousand, and Brenner Pass was a place where men’s footprints were absolutely rare. It also had no special local products, and the

terrain was steep and in close proximity to the Northern Wasteland. 'Cold climate' and 'barren land' were synonymous to that place. After the battle, the city walls had also been destroyed in several places. A small town like this was really hard to link with the word 'reward.' Any viscount of the Milan Empire had territory that was several times greater than what Ye Yin Zhu had been gifted. Silvio bellowed, "Imprudent. Men, go and escort the princess to rest. Withdraw till the morning."

Xiang Luan and Fisichella were both led away. Oliveira received Silvio's command. Naturally, it was concerns about his two elder brothers' punishments. Emperor Silvio had already given his orders before they'd returned. Even if Okafur and Austin absconded, they did not make a serious mistake. They had been anxious to fight to defend their country, so their punishment was lenient. Both would forfeit half a year's salary, a small punishment and great admonishment. 1

Ye Yin Zhu left with his three companions. Once he was sitting in the carriage following the departure of the civil and military officials, he couldn't help but be in a slight daze. What should I do? Ma Liang said that the Eight Eastern Dragon Sects have been yearning for territory for a long time. Could it be this so-called reward? In fact, at this moment, the feelings dominating his heart actually revolved around Xiang Luan being in his embrace after bumping into her earlier. As this scene continuously resounded within his mind, his zither heart cultivation had an unexpected, somewhat difficult time maintaining his sense of self.

"Ye Yin Zhu, his Majesty requests your presence." A skinny guard unknowingly appeared by Ye Yin Zhu's side.

"Requests for me?" Ye Yin Zhu woke up from his stupor.

The guard didn't say anything else and just turned around to leave. Ye Yin Zhu originally didn't know what he should do, so he simply followed the guard.

The Milan Empire's Imperial Palace resembled a labyrinth. Even with Ye Yin Zhu's excellent memory, after passing through a few exceedingly similar palaces and flower gardens, he was somewhat muddle-headed.

The guard led Ye Yin Zhu to a side palace hall before gesturing with his palm facing upward. "His Majesty is waiting for you inside."

Ye Yin Zhu pushed open the door and entered. The first thing he smelled was the scent of ink. He was surprised to discover that this was a study. Possibly speaking, this place could even be considered a library. The huge room's spaciousness was indecipherable, and rows upon rows of bookshelves were spread throughout with simple and unadorned books on them. The scent of ink was clearly coming from these books.

"Ye Yin Zhu, come over here." A soft voice pulled Ye Yin Zhu back from his examination of the books. He followed the voice, walking further into the room. He passed by a few shelves and found the owner of the voice. It was Emperor Silvio.

Silvio had changed into informal dress, significantly lessening the extravagant and poised feeling he'd emitted and imperceptibly increasing his approachability. Although his faint golden chang pao wasn't able to make him handsome, to Ye Yin Zhu, Silvio was even more like the first impression Ye Yin Zhu had of him being his next-door Uncle.

"Greetings, your Majesty." Ye Yin Zhu nodded towards Silvio.

Silvio closed his book and smiled, saying, "You, boy, have indeed given me a headache! I truly wanted to punish you."

Ye Yin Zhu's brows creased slightly. He asked, "Because I didn't kneel to you?"

Silvio shook his head and said, "No, it's because you molested my daughter. You should know that Xiang Luan is the pearl in my palm². Your behavior today in the main hall caused her to lose a lot of face. Don't tell me you don't believe you have erred?"

Ye Yin Zhu scratched his head. "It is my mistake. But I really didn't bump into her on purpose. I had been looking at you and didn't realize that she had stopped."

"Oh? You were looking at me? What did you see from me?" Silvio asked, engrossed.

Ye Yin Zhu replied, "I felt that Xiang Luan and Fisichella didn't resemble you very much, but you were nevertheless their father."

Silvio's complexion changed. If someone else said this to him, he would have

already given an order to execute the offender. Questioning the imperial bloodline was a huge crime. At this moment, he faintly laughed with a tinge of bitterness and said, “Naturally, they highly resemble their mothers. That is why they do not resemble me very much. Was this why you were looking at me?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Furthermore, I felt that you were very amiable. I had been thinking that you didn’t resemble a monarch as much as I originally thought.”

Silvio indifferently smiled and said, “Ye Yin Zhu, I called you here because I wanted to hear your opinion as a Divine Music mage. Perhaps you still don’t know, but your performance on the battlefield this time has already created huge waves in the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts. The Divine Music division’s status has risen substantially. At the moment, there are numerous mages questioning the rumors of Divine Music mages being trash.”

Ye Yin Zhu calmly stated, “I have never believed that Divine Music mages were trash! I felt that any vocation existed for a reason, that any vocation can be successful. It requires a lot of hard work, however. Grandfather Qin once taught me that if a Divine Music mage wants to become powerful, then you must first have an early love for music. Everyone has a different natural gift. This natural gift is the most important aspect, effort following closely behind.”

Silvio asked, “Then according to your words, you have worked very hard?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “That cannot be determined. I also don’t know whether I can be considered a hard-worker. Grandfather Qin said, however, that I have a gift for learning the zither.”

Silvio smiled. “Your Grandfather Qin, is he called Qin Shang?”

Ye Yin Zhu looked at him in surprise. “How did you know? Do you know my Grandfather Qin?”

Silvio sighed and said, “I’m afraid that there are already few who don’t know who this Grandfather Qin of yours is. In just a short month, the Longinus Continent suddenly gave birth to two Divine Music mages. And you also came from Arcadia. It seems that my conjectures weren’t mistaken.”

Ye Yin Zhu didn’t understand and plainly stated this. “I don’t understand what you mean.”

Silvio smiled slightly and elaborated. “Simply speaking, although your performance in the Battle of Konya City was astonishing, when compared to your Grandfather Qin, it is lacking somewhat. Since Arcadia is the smallest and weakest kingdom, its war with the Wavast Kingdom not long ago ended with an unexpected annihilation of a hundred thousand troops with captives surpassing sixty thousand. The war caused the Wavast Kingdom to lose a tremendous amount of elite troops and mages. This accomplishment was possible due to your Grandfather Qin. He did this by simply playing a zither song atop the city wall and nothing more. A Divine Music mage is already synonymous to a War Mage now. Since only a Voice Amplification spell is needed, a Divine Music mage’s attack range is terrifyingly high, capable of enveloping an army of a hundred thousand. This Grandfather Qin of yours is even a Violet Rank Great Magister, a truly hard to accept fact.”

Ye Yin Zhu exclaimed in awe, “The Kingdom of Arcadia went to war? My Grandfather Qin even joined? Was that the outcome? What happened after?”

Silvio said, “Be at ease. Your Grandfather Qin is naturally alright. Even though Arcadia’s and Wavast’s strengths has an immense disparity, because this grandfather of yours was the commanding officer, the Wavast Kingdom has already resigned itself to an unfortunate treaty reconciliation under the Blue Dias Empire. Your Grandfather Qin’s position is so strong that he refuses to even return the captives. It’s a pity that Arcadia is too far from Milan. Otherwise, I would’ve been able to meet this grandfather of yours.”

Hearing that Qin Shang was alright, Ye Yin Zhu couldn’t help but breathe a sigh of relief.

Silvio suddenly stated, “Yin Zhu—you are classmates with Xiang Luan and Fisichella, so I will call you this—which do you think is better, Arcadia or Milan?”

Ye Yin Zhu answered without the slightest hesitation. “Milan is better. Although it is a bit cold up here, it is still far better in every aspect compared to Arcadia.”

Silvio smiled. This time, the smile came from his heart. “If that’s the case, then I give you a choice. Would you like to stay in Milan?”

Ye Yin Zhu hesitated for a moment before saying, “I do not know. It depends

on where my family stays.”

Silvio nodded and said, “In the future, you can ask your family. The doors of Milan Empire will forever be opened wide to your entire family. At the same time, you must tell me what Arcadia has given to your Grandfather Qin. The Milan Empire is willing to triple their offer.”

Chapter 38 – Molesting the Princess (III)

Ye Yin Zhu blanked for a moment before asking, “What did Arcadia give Grandfather Qin?”

Silvio said, “As long as you pass my words to your Grandfather Qin, then everything will be fine. Yin Zhu, Xiang Luan had said that you’re inexperienced, and I see that this is correct. I believe you might have focused too much on studying music at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts.”

Ye Yin Zhu pondered for a while before nodding. “I also think that that is the case. Previously at home, I didn’t acknowledge matters of the outside world. After I came to Milan, however, I felt that my knowledge was lacking. When I return to the institution this time, I will definitely learn from other fields of knowledge as well.”

Silvio smiled slightly and said, “This time, I reduced the amount of rewards you deserved. Do you blame me?” At this moment, his manner of speech was nothing like a monarch’s.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, “I had never wanted a reward.”

Silvio said, “Although the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts is the best college on the continent, the institution mainly educates you about martial arts or magic, as per usual. If you want to learn other things, then I’m afraid you will be disappointed. The Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts doesn’t teach miscellaneous subjects.”

Ye Yin Zhu was saddened. “Then where can I go to learn?” Currently, he yearned for knowledge, as he didn’t want others to continue going on and on about how he was like an idiot since he couldn’t understand.

Silvio stood up and pointed at the nearby bookshelves, saying, “Have you never heard that saying? Within books is a house of gold, within books is precious jade.¹ If you want to obtain the knowledge you desire, then these books will be your closest friend.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes brightened. “Thank you, your Majesty.”

Silvio smiled faintly and replied, “Call me Uncle Silvio. Hero of Milan. Starting today, you can enter this library as you please. This place is the Empire’s Royal Library and is possibly the library with the most intact and preserved ancient texts on the continent. In here, you can definitely learn to your heart’s desire.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s character was pure, so he didn’t bother to wonder why Silvio was being so familiar with him and sincerely thanked him. “Thank you, Uncle Silvio.”

Silvio handed an emblem over to Ye Yin Zhu. “Present this when you return in the future; someone will naturally guide you here.”

Ye Yin Zhu lowered his head to look at it. He realized that the emblem in his hand was identical to the one Xiang Luan and Fisichella had—the emblem of the Milan Royal Family, the Milan Ruby Cross Shield Emblem.

“Konya City is your territory for the time being. Although that place isn’t taxed very heavily, it should still be enough for you right now. As the Lord of Konya City, you have the authority to give it a new name. What do you think it should be called?”

Ye Yin Zhu thought for a moment, before declaring, “It shall be called Zither City.”

“Zither City, very aptly named. Your journey was wearying; you should return and rest first. I will have Xiang Luan send for you when the official appointment takes place. Attendant, come. Deliver Ye Yin Zhu out of the palace.”

Ye Yin Zhu left. Silvio’s smiling visage changed into one of contemplation. Although he was still smiling, it was more profound than before.

“Your Majesty, you are too generous to that boy.” A deep voice echoed from beside him. Seedorf’s tall and aged figure appeared beside Silvio.

Silvio shook his head and said, “No, I don’t think so. This child is absolutely

worth the investment. A genius Divine Music mage; although I'm highly optimistic of his Grandfather Qin, I am even more optimistic of him. After all, he is significantly younger, no? Even more importantly, his relationship with Xiang Luan and Fisichella is quite good."

Seedorf's heart was moved. He suddenly understood this monarch's reasoning and exclaimed in admiration, "Your Majesty is wise and farsighted. But today, he was disrespectful to the princess..."

Silvio replied, "If he can raise his Divine Music cultivation to Cyan Rank or higher during his time at the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts, then I can consider marrying Xiang Luan to him."

Seedorf was greatly alarmed within his heart. At this moment, he clearly understood the extent of Silvio's unexpected regard toward Ye Yin Zhu.

The smile on Silvio's face gradually disappeared. He turned to Seedorf and said, "Uncle Seedorf, you and Uncle Maldini are the pillars of the Empire. To you, I also have no need to hide anything. Take a look at this." As he said this, he opened the book within his hand and extracted two letters hidden within the pages. He handed them to Seedorf.

"Of these two letters, one had been sent by Uncle Maldini with haste through a courier. Among the contents, not only is there a detailed account of everything that had happened at the Battle of Konya City, there is also Uncle Maldini's analysis of the matter. Although Ye Yin Zhu is young, although he is pure, an additional side of him emerges in battle.

"As for the other letter, this was what my older sister had previously sent via courier to me. Inside is only one short line: 'At all costs, with the best and most generous treatment, get Ye Yin Zhu to stay in Milan.'"

Seedorf asked in surprise, "Your Majesty, are you speaking of Princess Niya?"

Silvio sighed lightly. "Older sister still has yet to marry, as she will only accept one man. This is considered a secret of the royal family. And this man, he is Ye Yin Zhu's teacher, that Grandfather Qin. My older sister has never praised anyone lightly, and her gaze is extremely far-reaching. Uncle Seedorf, I think now you understand my reasoning."

Seedorf's eyes flashed with a violet light as he gazed at the two letters placed in his hand. He nodded.



Leaving the Imperial Palace, the oppressive feeling that emanated from the royal family immediately disappeared. Silvio's discussion with him had greatly improved his mood. Regardless of anything else, the right to read inside that library was the best reward he could've received.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't return to the Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts immediately. Since he entered Milan City, he decided to seek Anya out first. In his heart, he had long since regarded Anya as an older sister; not because Anya gave him so many precious gifts, but because Anya was dear to him.

It just happened to be the afternoon when Ye Yin Zhu arrived at Floating Orchid Pavilion, and Floating Orchid Pavilion was doing business as usual. When he walked through the door, he came across a busy Dida.

"Ah! Ye Yin Zhu returned." Dida welcomed him, pleasantly surprised.

"Hello, Elder Brother Dida," Ye Yin Zhu courteously greeted him.

Dida smiled and said, "You might not know it, but these few days that you had been gone, the clients of Floating Orchid Pavilion had all missed you dearly. Without your zither music, this place seems to be lacking something. We all felt ill at ease. If Miss knew that you had returned, she would definitely be elated. Quickly come in."

Dida led Ye Yin Zhu directly to the third floor.

When Anya saw that Ye Yin Zhu had returned, she immediately became pleased beyond her expectations. She led him straight to her residence within the tree, warning Dida repeatedly to not allow anyone to disturb them.

Repeatedly scanning Ye Yin Zhu up and down, Anya said, "Yin Zhu, did your zither music breakthrough a little once more?"

Yin Zhu stared blankly at her before saying, "Elder Sister Anya, why do you say that?"

Anya smiled slightly and said, "The change in your temperament is a reflection

of your strength. Your temperament is more aggressive than before. It reflects a great deal of changes.”

Anya was still very beautiful, elegantly beautiful in her light green cheongsam that accentuated an absolutely gorgeous body. Her elegance was similar to that of a goddess of nature.

Ye Yin Zhu smiled and replied, “I forgot that Elder Sister is a Violet Rank. It’s really hard to accept this with how beautiful you are.”

Anya laughed and then scolded him. “You, little boy, also know how to play tricks. Don’t follow bad examples, okay? I heard about what you did. After all of that, I don’t dare to have you play here anymore. For the moment, you are the hero of the Milan Empire.”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Elder Sister, you don’t want me anymore?”

Anya sighed lightly and said, “No, it’s not that I don’t want you; elder sister might need to leave this place.”

Within his heart, Ye Yin Zhu was frightened. He felt a reluctance to part with her, a feeling that arose involuntarily. “Why? Is Floating Orchid Pavilion’s business not doing so good?”

Anya shook her head and said, “It has nothing to do with the business. Do you remember that story I told you previously? Since my older sister has discovered this place, she will definitely come back. When that time comes, I wouldn’t be able to deal with her like I did last time. After all, she has powers I am far from being able to compare with. Not to mention, she is also from the Dark Pagoda.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes flashed with a cold light. “Elder Sister, I’ll help you.”

Anya tugged at Ye Yin Zhu’s hand. “You just made this Elder Sister’s heart very happy. But it’s useless. On Longinus, who can contend against Falan’s Seven Story Pagoda? Perhaps, it is this Elder Sister’s fate to be a wanderer.”

Ye Yin Zhu was stunned. In his heart, the feeling of reluctance became more intense. He stared at the loneliness on Anya’s face, and a desire to protect her grew within him. “Elder Sister Anya, where will you go?”

Anya shook her head and said, “I still don’t know. Far away from here. A place

where my older sister can't find me."

Ye Yin Zhu's mind suddenly flashed with enlightenment. "Then it would be better if you go to my territory. I was rewarded with the title of Viscount, and Konya City is now my territory. But, it's a bit cold there."

Anya's eyes brightened. "Konya City? Where's that?" As she spoke, she moved, seemingly performing magic. She extracted an intact sheepskin map from her space ring and unfurled it in front of Ye Yin Zhu.

Ye Yin Zhu carefully examined it for a moment before finding Konya City on the border of the Milan Empire and the Northern Wasteland.

Anya attentively surveyed the topography illustrated on the map. The smile within her eyes brightened. "Good, this is indeed fantastic. It seems that the Heavens have arranged for you to help Elder Sister. Konya City is a remote location surrounded by mountains, easy to guard but hard to attack. Yin Zhu, if you don't mind, will you allow Elder Sister to help you build your territory? Regardless of how infertile the land is, so long as us elves are there, we can make it become fertile."

As far as building Konya City was concerned, Ye Yin Zhu held no ideas of his own, but since he didn't want to lose Anya, this Elder Sister of his, he hurriedly agreed. "Of course you can. Isn't my territory now Elder Sister's territory as well?"

Anya smiled. She secretly thought within her heart, Elder Sister, ah, Elder Sister. It seems I finally have a level to compete with you in, even if it's in the cold north.

Chapter 39 – The Summons of Silver Dragon City (I)

Withdrawing from Anya’s magnificent hospitality, Ye Yin Zhu returned to Milan Institution for Magic and Martial Arts upon finishing dinner. He promised Anya that when he obtained the official letter of appointment, he would immediately go to Konya City. From that moment on, he, the Lord of Zither City, would give control of Zither City’s affairs to Anya to handle.

The night sky was clear tonight, the moon and stars especially visible. Walking along the small paved road on campus, Ye Yin Zhu suddenly sensed something. He realized that he seemed to have changed after coming to Milan and getting acquainted with so many people. All of this seemed to have continuously influenced him. At this moment, however, he was slightly homesick, missing his parents and two grandfathers. He also missed the sixteen years he had lived in Desolate Jade Sea.

“Esteemed Viscount, what are you doing taking a stroll instead of immediately returning to the dorms?” Sura said as he came out of nowhere and looked at him with a smile.

When Ye Yin Zhu gazed at Sura, the homesickness within his heart lessened slightly. He suddenly discovered that Sura’s smile today appeared to be a little different from usual. Although he was smiling, his eyes were ice-cold.

“Sura, I went to visit Floating Orchid Pavilion, so I’m returning a bit late. What’s up with you? You seem rather unhappy.”

Sura snorted. “How could I dare be unhappy! You are already an esteemed Viscount.”

Confused beyond belief, Ye Yin Zhu asked, “Sura, what’s wrong with you?”

Sura didn’t say anything. He turned around and walked away. Ye Yin Zhu hurriedly chased after him. “Sura, did I make you angry?”

Sura stopped walking and turned his head to look at him, saying, “Your skills are becoming greater and greater, who dares to be angry at you. Daring to molest the Imperial Princess, you can be considered the first person on the

continent.”

“Eh..., you’re angry because of this! Listen to my explanation. I really didn’t do it on purpose.”

While Ye Yin Zhu spoke apologetically, the two of them returned to the villa.

An aroma assaulted Ye Yin Zhu’s senses the instant he entered. On a table within the small villa’s lounge, aromatic smells wafted from six dishes, appearing to have only slightly cooled.

Ye Yin Zhu felt his heart and eyes warming up momentarily. Sura was waiting outside for him to return! And he had already prepared a delicious meal.

“Sura, how were you able to make so many delicious dishes today?”

Sura unhappily replied, “The Milan Empire had bestowed the rewards. Originally, with the money I had, I wanted to let a certain person eat well, but now all of this is unnecessary. I’ll go throw it in the trash.” After he said this, he went to grab a plate.

“Stop! Throwing away so much is a pity! It smells delicious! The food Sura makes tastes the best.”

“Really?”

“Of course. I vow to thee.”

Sura glanced at him blankly. “Who wants your vow. If it’s delicious, eat quickly.” As he said this, he picked up his own chopsticks as well. While waiting for Ye Yin Zhu to return, not only did he make tasty food, he also hadn’t eaten anything.

What he had previously eaten at the Floating Orchid Pavilion had yet to be digested, but he was now gorging down the meal—he couldn’t let Sura see. Although the food was tasty, the stomach always had a limit...

“Yin Zhu, in the future you need to pay a bit more attention. Don’t touch a girl too much. Otherwise, today’s situation is very likely to happen again.” Sura’s brows wrinkled slightly as he looked at Ye Yin Zhu.

“I’ll pay attention. Sura, am I very stupid?” Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes displayed a trace of bitterness and astringency.

Sura shook his head, softly saying, “No, you are definitely not stupid. You are the most intelligent person I have ever seen. Don’t tell me that an idiot can learn the numerous things Olivera talked about in such a short period of time? It’s just that you never had much opportunity to interact with the outside world. These things, you will gradually learn, so don’t blame yourself too much.”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded, responding, “Yes, I will definitely improve more and more. Sura, I have made a decision. For the time being, I will not follow the Divine Music division coursework and will instead go to the library to read.”

Sura asked in shock. “Read?”

Ye Yin Zhu told him of the discussion he had with Silvio today. Hearing his recount, Sura’s brows couldn’t help but crease. “What is the Imperial Majesty up to? You are only a very minor Yellow Rank mage. Even if you have contributed greatly this time, he doesn’t need to be so good to you as well! Not to mention that you had just molested his daughter. This isn’t right. There’s something strange afoot.”

Ye Yin Zhu objected. “There shouldn’t be! I think Uncle Silvio is a good person. Aren’t you thinking too much about this?”

A light flashed through Sura’s eyes. “Perhaps. However, a monarch’s schemes are not something an ordinary person is capable of understanding.”

Ye Yin Zhu countered, “Sura, is it that you do not like me going to the Imperial Palace to read?”

Sura shook his head and said, “No. What Silvio said is right. Reading a lot is the best method for you to blend into society as soon as possible. You can go, but be a bit more careful. If you’re not going to attend classes with the Divine Music division, however, you need to talk with Dean Nina first. From what I’ve seen, she values you highly.”

Upon hearing Sura mention Nina, Ye Yin Zhu immediately recalled something. “Right, I actually really do need to go find Grandma Nina.”

Sura asked, surprised, “Right now? Isn’t it a bit late?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “I want to go to the Imperial Palace tomorrow to read, so shouldn’t I go find Grandma Nina right now? I’ll return soon, so you should go to

rest first.” After he finished speaking, he reluctantly ate the last bits of food in his rice bowl and left the dorms.

When he heard Ye Yin Zhu close the door, Sura sighed and thought aloud, “Silvio really is worthy of the title of being the most outstanding monarch since the beginning of the Milan Empire. At the moment, he’s unexpectedly beginning to win over Yin Zhu. On this point, he’s much stronger than my damnable old man. But, Yin Zhu, in the end, will this be good or bad for you?”



Nina’s residence was also a villa and was slightly bigger than a student’s’. Ye Yin Zhu had visited her once. A small garden with all kinds of herbs grew at the front of her door as well, very unique.

“Grandma Nina, are you home?”

“The door’s not closed; you can come in.” Nina’s serene voice rang out from inside.

Ye Yin Zhu entered the villa, only to see Nina coming down the stairs.

“Grandma Nina, I came back.”

Nina’s eyes exuded a faint, benevolent light. She smiled slightly and said, “Sit, Esteemed Viscount.”

Ye Yin Zhu said in embarrassment, “You don’t need speak so humbly with me.”

Nina hummed and said, “Seems like you still have some conscience, visiting me first as soon as you come back. You also don’t need to tell me what happened this time, I already know. Not bad, you gave our Divine Music division a lot of honor, but you also caused quite a bit of trouble. Most of the hubbub of this currently raucous college has to do with many mages wanting to switch divisions and become a Divine Music mage. President Ferguson already came looking for me numerous times.”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Grandma Nina, I don’t want to go to class for the time being. Is that okay?”

Nina stared blankly at him for a moment before saying, “Not go to class? Are you not satisfied? Although it’s true that your zither achievements are very high,

but you must know that as a Divine Music mage, you need to continuously temper yourself for your talent to improve.”

Ye Yin Zhu hastily explained, “It’s not like that...” He immediately launched into his intentions to spend a great amount of time in the library. After she finished listening to his explanation, Nina’s complexion could be considered to be a little bit better.

“If this is the case, you can go, but for only this term. When the next term begins, you need to obediently return to my class. At the same time, your zither playing performance cannot drop. It is absolutely essential that you practice it every day.”

“I will. Grandma Nina, my space ring has been returned.”

“Returned?” Nina didn’t realize what Ye Yin Zhu meant for a moment.

In a flash of light, a letter floated in the air above Ye Yin Zhu’s space ring before falling into the palm of his hand. He handed it over to Nina at last.

Nina’s body suddenly stiffened. On the envelope were a few words. For the eyes of Nina only. A name was signed with bold and vigorous strokes——Qin Shang.

She was unable to control her hands from trembling slightly. Nina slowly reached out to receive the letter. Oh how familiar this calligraphy was! It was him; this was his letter. Cautiously and solemnly opening the envelope, her actions were like a Buddha, as if she was afraid of tearing the envelope even slightly. She extracted a single leaf of paper from inside. Her entire gaze seemed to be immersed with its contents. Nina’s whole body became immobilized because of this letter. As she read it silently, her breathing became somewhat rushed. Because of her spiritual force’s fluctuations, the magical elements surrounding her body became somewhat chaotic.

For such a very short letter, Nina unexpectedly took half an hour to read it.

“Bastard. Qin Shang, you old bastard.” Nina suddenly began cursing in rage, scaring Ye Yin Zhu.

“Grandma Nina, why are you cursing Grandfather Qin?” Ye Yin Zhu asked in surprise.

Nina's aura was unstable as she looked at Ye Yin Zhu. "Me cursing him is already considered light. If he was here, I would want to kill him. He threw you to me, yet he didn't even write a line about sending his greetings. Bastard. Bastard." As the curses left her lips, her eyes were already becoming red. What her hands were doing and the rage spilling from her lips, however, were completely different matters. Very carefully, she put away the letter.

"Yin Zhu, have you read this letter?" Nina abruptly asked.

Ye Yin Zhu shook his head and said, "Grandfather Qin gave this to you. How could I read it?"

Nina said, "Then it's fine. You can go back first. Do as you want and study hard."

"Oh." With Nina's mood this unstable, Ye Yin Zhu didn't dare to say any longer and hurriedly left.

Staring after Ye Yin Zhu's departing back, Nina hatefully said, "Qin Shang, you old bastard. There will inevitably be a day where I will settle my score with you. You made your disciple come to the Divine Music division to be a teacher? I won't. I'll insist on making him be just a student instead. Hmph, Yin Zhu is the pride of our Divine Music division."

The next morning, the students had already returned from the autumnal defensive war and once more resumed their ordinary lives. There was only one exception, the focal point of the institution—Ye Yin Zhu. He hadn't returned to Divine Music classes. Instead, he left the institution extremely early each day only to return very late into the evening. Only a small minority of people knew what he was doing.

Chapter 39 – The Summons of Silver Dragon City (II)

After Generalissimo Maldini finished dealing with the frontier affairs, he withdrew his troops and returned to court. When he returned, however, he was startled to discover that Floating Orchid Pavilion had already switched owners. Anya had disappeared, and the waiters under her control were also missing. Not a single one had stayed, nor was a single trace evident. The strangest thing,

though, was the additional disappearance of the humongous tree in the center of Floating Orchid Pavilion. He had no clue that Anya had long taken Ye Yin Zhu's Lord writ and headed to Zither City.



Sitting cross-legged on the ground with his back leaning against a bookshelf, Ye Yin Zhu attentively read an ancient journal written by a wandering bard.

It had already been close to a month since he began visiting the Royal Library to read. Apart from his necessary cultivation, all of his energy would be spent on reading every day. Rather than seeking other cultivation methods, he was reading in order to better understand this world.

The original Ye Yin Zhu was a blank piece of paper, but the current him was like color had been added to this blank piece of paper with astonishing speed. Starting with reading the most basic books, in a month's time, Ye Yin Zhu had already learned a tremendously large amount of things.

The Royal Library was larger than what could be imagined, altogether consisting of five floors. Apart from the first floor which Ye Yin Zhu had seen the first time he had visited, there were an additional four floors underground. No wonder at that time Silvio had said that this was the largest and most expansive library on the continent.

There truly were an immense number of books within. Although Ye Yin Zhu had resolved to increase his knowledge through reading, the books he had been reading up until now on the first floor were merely a very small part of his goals. He regarded this place as a treasury of knowledge, his will along with his understanding gradually improving as well. This bit he could clearly sense within himself.

The sound of footsteps drifted over. Ye Yin Zhu subconsciously raised his head to take a look. Only a member of the Royal Family could come here, and the Milan Empire's Royal Family was pitifully small, so ordinarily, it was very quiet in the library.

The person who came was Fisichella, his complexion prominently unsightly. He quickly walked up to Ye Yin Zhu. "Yin Zhu, stop reading and come with me quickly. I'm taking you somewhere to hide."

“Hide? Why? How come you are here and not in class?” Ye Yin Zhu stared at him in astonishment.

Fisichella urgently said, “I don’t have classes in the afternoon. Don’t ask questions and follow me. You are in big trouble. This matter, my Imperial Father can do nothing about it. He ordered me to immediately take you to a safe location.”

Ye Yin Zhu’s curiosity had always been very powerful, and after immersing himself within books, he had a very difficult time freeing himself of this curiosity. At this moment, Fisichella wasn’t allowing him to read nor was he telling him the reason why. He couldn’t help the resentment arising within him. “Fisichella, you need to clearly tell me everything first. Only then will I go with you. What happened? I have come here every day to read, so how could I have caused trouble?”

Fisichella rolled his eyes. “Boss, I’m beseeching you. Come with me quickly. Otherwise, we’ll be too late. You don’t need to know about this matter for the time being.”

“No. If you don’t tell me, I’m not going,” Ye Yin Zhu firmly stated.

Fisichella hesitated for a moment before saying, “Fine. I’ll tell you then. Do you remember when we were in Konya City, back when those beastmen were invading the city that is now your territory’s Zither City, and you used some method to defeat them?”

Ye Yin Zhu nodded and said, “A zither song!”

Fisichella bitterly laughed and said, “The trouble is this zither song of yours. That day when you played that zither song, a thousand dragons altogether exploded—a grand event that still remains fresh in my memory to this day. Nevertheless, your zither song had caused dragons to explode! This news somehow reached Silver Dragon City. Right now, people from Silver Dragon City came. They say they want to take you back for questioning.”

A radiant light flashed within Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes. “Is it because I’m a threat to them?” The books he had read this month had hardened him; he could clearly understand several matters of the outside world.

Fisichella nodded and replied, “That’s right. If I was of the dragon race, I would probably be quite afraid of you as well. You’re a Yellow Rank that can cause tamed dragons to self-detonate. If you were a little bit more serious, isn’t it possible that you might casually massacre Gigantic Dragons in the future? Come with me quickly. Silver Dragon City is insufferable. My Imperial Father is dealing with their people at the moment so I can hide you away first. When they leave, we’ll have to think of another method.”

“Want to leave? A person that Silver Dragon City wants, there still hasn’t been someone who can hide away.” A clear, sonorous, piercing voice suddenly rang out, startling Fisichella. Ye Yin Zhu’s gaze immediately became glacial.

In the blink of an eye, the two of them felt as if they were in a new reality. All of the magical elements in the room suddenly came alive, genuinely swirling with life. Every magical element seemed to have its own sentience, cheerfully and lightheartedly bouncing around. In merely a split second, all of the magical elements within the entire Royal Library suddenly increased several-fold in intensity, even causing people to feel as if they were experiencing a reality where the air was too thick to move in.

What kind of power could cause the magical elements in the air to suddenly change? Ye Yin Zhu had experienced this once before when Anya had been battling her sister. The solidified air had seemed to have locked his body in place, making it difficult for him to even move a slight fraction.

A silver Six-Pointed Star appeared without forewarning within the Royal Library. In a silvery flash of light, a figure appeared out of nothingness.

First-rate Spatial Domain magic, teleportation.

It was a young man, approximately twenty years old with long silver hair trailing behind his back. His handsome facial features were impossible to be possessed by a human. He wore a silver chang pao, and although he wasn’t particularly tall, he still gave people a lofty feeling. What was most eye-catching, however, was his violet eyes. That was right, he had two deep violet eyes.

His violet eyes flickered with a magical light, locking Ye Yin Zhu in place instantly. “You are Ye Yin Zhu?”

Ye Yin Zhu calmly replied, “I am.”

The violet-eyed youth nodded and said, “Then good. Come with me.”

Ye Yin Zhu frowned and asked, “Why?”

The violet-eyed youth said, “Because I said so.”

Ye Yin Zhu suddenly smiled. “Is Silver Dragon City fun?”

The violet-eyed youth stared blankly. “You’re not afraid?”

Ye Yin Zhu indifferently replied, “Why should I be afraid? Don’t tell me that you Silver Dragons are unparalleled?”

The violet-eyed youth angrily proclaimed, “Silver Dragons are without equal on the continent.”

Ye Yin Zhu disdainfully snorted. “If you are without equal, then this world wouldn’t have an Onyx Dragon City.” A few days ago, he had read a book that gave an introduction about the dragon race’s territories and cities on the Longinus Continent.

There were a total of seven large dragon cities on Longinus Continent. These were the Silver Dragon City, Onyx Dragon City, Golden Dragon City, Crimson Dragon City, Azure Dragon City, Citrine Dragon City, and Emerald Dragon City. Among these, Silver Dragons, Onyx Dragons, and Golden Dragons were the top three dragon races. A fully matured Gigantic Dragon of any of these races was capable of reaching rank 9. Although Onyx Dragon City didn’t have as strong of a potential for all kinds of magic as Silver Dragon City, their physical bodies were significantly stronger than Silver Dragons. And Golden Dragons were even more well-known for having the strongest bodies of the metal dragon race. As for Crimson Dragon City, Azure Dragon City, Citrine Dragon City, and Emerald Dragon City, they each represented the four natural elemental magics of the Gigantic Dragons. Crimson for the dragon race of fire, Azure for the dragon race of water, Citrine for the dragon race of earth, and Emerald for the dragon race of wind.

Each of these seven dragon cities had different statuses on the continent. Similar to Falan, they all held superior statuses. No country was willing to offend these genuine Gigantic Dragons. Apart from Arcadia, the remaining seven countries each had a dragon city they were allied with. Since Milan was the

strongest empire, they were naturally allied with the powerful Silver Dragon City. It was just that to be able to obtain the approval of the Silver Dragons and become a Silver Dragon Cavalry Knight; Seedorf was the only one.

The relationships between the dragon cities were similar to the relations amongst the human countries, not united at all. The wars between them, however, were not something humans could see.

Onyx Dragon City and Silver Dragon City were mortal enemies. Silver Dragon City's ally were Emerald Dragon City, Crimson Dragon City, and Citrine Dragon City. The remaining two dragon cities were allied with Onyx Dragon City. Although Onyx Dragons and Golden Dragons were peak dragon races, the Silver Dragon race still had four dragon cities, hence both sides were equalled to one another, and neither could slight the other. At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu's words stirred up the taboo branded across the heart of this currently-in-humanoid-form mature Silver Dragon.

"Do you want to court death?" Innumerable violet wind blades appeared out of nowhere without any incantations, surrounding Ye Yin Zhu. With merely a thought from this violet-eyed youth, these blades could collectively pierce into him.

"Lisha, stay your hand." Another silver Six-Pointed Star appeared within the Royal Library, but this time, three individuals came through.

The person standing at the front had strong facial features; the same silvery hair, silver chang pao, and violet eyes; and a height significantly taller than the violet-eyed youth. The violet wind blades within the air seemed to recognize him and voluntarily spread out into the surroundings. Behind him was the Milan Empire's Emperor Silvio and Generalissimo Seedorf.

"Asius, you are making me stop? Do you know what he just said?" The killing intent within Lisha's eyes was extremely rich and powerful, ready to break out at any second.

The silver-haired man called Asius snorted coldly. "Do not forget. Our Silver Dragon City and Milan Empire have a collaborative relationship, and this youth had just become a pillar of the Milan Empire. This time, Elder ordered you to bring him back, not to injure him."

Hearing the word ‘Elder,’ the expression on Lisha’s face clearly changed a bit. Smothering a groan, the violet wind blades causing the air to become stifling faded away.

Silvio somewhat awkwardly looked at Ye Yin Zhu. “Yin Zhu, I’m afraid that you have to visit Silver Dragon City this time. But you should feel reassured. It was for the Empire that you played that kind of zither song. Uncle will argue strongly on your behalf.”

Ye Yin Zhu smiled faintly and said, “It’s okay, Uncle Silvio. I’ll go. Just not right at this moment.”

Lisha angrily accused, “Do you want to stall for time?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “Because I still have something to do. Once I finish this task, I’ll go with you.”

Lisha laughed, his ice-cold and cruel laughter brimming with a feeling of disdain. “What can be more important than the summons of the Silver Dragon City? Ye Yin Zhu, you’re offending the honor of the Silver Dragon City such that even if we are in an alliance with the Milan Empire, I can kill you at any time.”

Silvio sent a meaningful look towards Ye Yin Zhu, hinting for him to not enrage Lisha again.

Ye Yin Zhu seemed to not see Silvio’s gaze as he turned towards Seedorf instead, lightly exclaiming, “I don’t need ten more days, but my senior does. Ten days, I need them to give her the final medical treatment. If I leave, then her face can never be cured.”

Chapter 39 – The Summons of Silver Dragon City (III)

Seedorf saw the deep thoughts churning within Ye Yin Zhu’s gaze, and his heart moved in response. “What is the name of this senior?”

Ye Yin Zhu tranquilly answered, “She is called Hai Yang.”

Upon hearing the two words, ‘Hai Yang,’ Seedorf’s eyes immediately opened wide in shock. “You, you’re saying you can cure Hai Yang’s face?”

Ye Yin Zhu merely smiled, silent.

To the side, Lisha couldn't sense the change in Seedorf. Since he'd come from Silver Dragon City, his arrogance prevented him from properly observing the outside world, apart, of course, from his own race. "What ocean or dry land. You must come with me right now. Otherwise, don't blame me for being rude." 1

Seedorf and Asius' complexions changed simultaneously. Asius bellowed, "Lisha, don't speak arbitrarily."

Lisha loftily said, "Don't tell me I spoke erroneously? Asius, you have stayed for so long in the human world that you've already forgotten the honor of our Silver Dragon race."

All of a sudden, with a flash of violet light, a fantastical scene emerged. Rich, magical elements, which had caused the air to be like tar originally, unexpectedly seemed to part in but a moment, as if a sharp blade had torn the space asunder. An illusory figure instantly flashed through the opening within the magical elements, and a violet light flickered intensely around a long sword as it pointed directly at Lisha's neck.

Lisha felt his entire body go cold. He was aghast to discover that his connection to the magical elements was, in an instant, unexpectedly and completely severed. The slight breeze of cold air at his neck caused his skin to tremble, and a surge of killing intent similar to the God of Death calling enveloped his soul.

Seedorf's eyes were cold. His sword wasn't very broad, but it was called River God's Longsword and was in fact a genuine divine device.

A Silver Dragon was admittedly powerful, but that was mainly because they relied on their magic. Upon transforming into human form, even if they were a Silver Dragon, they would be unable to resist a powerful Violet Rank Level 6 individual who was close to their person.

And Seedorf was awfully close to Lisha, his icy glare making Lisha—who had left Silver Dragon City for the first time—feel extreme fright. "The Milan Empire is willing to cooperate with Silver Dragon City, but the Milan Empire is not afraid of Silver Dragon City. Today, you are a very important guest, and I have extreme respect for my Emperor. Do not believe that a Silver Dragon is the most powerful

lifeform on this world. Let me tell you who Hai Yang is; she is my sole granddaughter, my extremely beloved granddaughter.”

As the most powerful person in the Milan Empire, Seedorf’s temperament was worse than even Maldini’s. When they’d arrived in the library just now, this leader, Lisha of the Silver Dragons, had been bragging for so long that Seedorf had long been unable to bear.

Asius’ figure flashed, arriving beside Seedorf. He hastily interjected, “Old partner, don’t get angry. I apologize to you on his behalf.”

A sharp light flashed through Seedorf’s eyes, and he mused to Lisha in a deep voice, “In those days, our entire family participated in the war between Silver Dragon City and Onyx Dragon City. My son and daughter-in-law lost their lives in that war. My granddaughter also suffered from the corrosive Onyx Dragon magic in her infancy, leaving a cursed, corroded scar on her face. You may take Ye Yin Zhu back to Silver Dragon City—ten days from now.”

Once he finished speaking, the longsword in Seedorf’s hand magically disappeared. Violet dou qi suddenly burst forth and sent Lisha’s body flying thunderously away.

Lisha crashed into the ground and rolled back up into a standing position, his originally neat silver robe instantly becoming disheveled. He blankly stared at Seedorf. All of a sudden, wa! He actually began crying. What caused the most astonishment, however, was that his sobbing sounded surprisingly feminine. With a flicker of silvery light, her figure disappeared from the library, traceless.

Silvio shook his head helplessly. “So as it turns out, she was a female dragon. No wonder she was so unruly.”

Asius sighed and said, “Her grandfather spoils her. Lisha, this child, is the darling of our Silver Dragon race. Her grandfather is the Lord of the Silver Dragons, a venerable elder of the race. I truly don’t know why Venerable Elder sent her this time.”

Seedorf suddenly had a revelation. “I say, although your Silver Dragon race is prideful, you’re still considerably reasonable. This female drake² is actually the Silver Dragon Princess. No wonder.” After he stated this, he abruptly turned toward Ye Yin Zhu. “Can you really treat Hai Yang’s face?”

Ye Yin Zhu said, “I have a seventy percent chance. All that’s left is the final treatment. After it’s administered, we can see how senior’s recovery is. If we’re lucky, she should be able to recover completely.”

When these words left his mouth, not only was Seedorf shocked, Silver Dragon Asius—who stood beside him—was as well, his mouth opened wide. “How is this possible? At that time, I’d utilized Violet Rank Light Healing Magic and was unsuccessful; how can you succeed?”

Ye Yin Zhu stated, “Light magic can only purify and cannot eradicate the curse and darkness within the flesh. If you want to cure senior, you need to use a tremendous amount of life aura to help her own vitality completely expel the curse and corrosion.”

Asius’ eyes displayed a pensive light. Seedorf muttered, “This girl, how come she didn’t mention this to me.”

Emperor Silvio smiled and said, “Every day you assist me and are preoccupied with national security matters of large importance. How would you have the time to attend to your granddaughter? Yin Zhu, be at ease. Uncle will certainly do his best to protect you. Silver Dragon City will, at most, ask you some questions. Although your ability to cause draconic explosions with a zither song can constitute as a threat to the dragon race, this does not apply to Silver Dragons at all, right?”

Silvio and company left, leaving Ye Yin Zhu within the library alone. At this moment, Ye Yin Zhu reflected over the words Silvio had said before leaving. What did he try to point out to me? Ye Yin Zhu’s eyes brightened. He suddenly understood. Silvio was pointing out to him that the seven large dragon cities had a disharmonious relationship. Even if Silver Dragon City proved that his zither song could kill or injure the dragon race, so long as he stated that this zither song could be employed against Onyx Dragon City, they would no longer fear being unable to protect themselves. Old ginger really was hotter.³ Silvio pointed out to him the essential key he needed.

Sighing, Ye Yin Zhu once again sat on the floor. When Lisha intended to launch an attack at him earlier, he was already well-prepared to summon Zi, therefore making him secure in the knowledge that he was able to confront Lisha. Even

though Zi might not be Lisha's match, since Zi had the strength to order the Gold Behemoths around, perhaps he could've summoned the Gold Behemoths to come and fight. Nonetheless, the Behemoth race was the enemy of humankind, and it had not yet been absolutely essential. Ye Yin Zhu didn't want to expose Zi's connection to the Behemoths.

Retrieving the book he had placed to the side, Ye Yin Zhu tried to find a comfortable position as he laid on the ground. These days, he had truly been learning a lot of new knowledge, and the influence this had on his mentality wasn't small. In addition, these past few months he'd spent in Milan made the current him drastically dissimilar to the 'unversed in world affairs' youth that had just left Desolate Jade Sea. Apart from reading, he'd also focused intensely on cultivating, but his dou qi improvement progress was very slow. He didn't know if it was because he had accepted Zi's power too quickly at that time or not. Yellow Bamboo Level 5 seemed to have already become an extremely difficult bottleneck for him to break through.

His zither magic was progressing extremely quickly. Especially after playing the zither song << Soaring Dragon's Cry >>; his spiritual ocean had received a massive expansion. After a month of cultivation, his spiritual force had made remarkable progress, already showing signs of breaking through to Level 3 of the Courageous Zither Heart.

He ran his hand along the bookshelf and retrieved a book, intending to use it as a pillow so he could make himself a bit more comfortable. Suddenly, Ye Yin Zhu realized that the book he'd taken out was titled 《 Music Foundation Theory 》. He didn't know whether to laugh or cry. It seemed that he really was a genius at learning the zither. Otherwise, why else would he randomly seize a book that was related to music?

His hands subconsciously opened this book to the first page. The first page only had a few simple lines of words.

「General Principle: Music is a special branch of knowledge and relies on the different frequencies a vibrating object produces. These vibrations create beautiful melodies that are arranged into musical compositions, and thus named.」

What was a genius? A genius was absolutely able to grasp opportunities from the smallest to the most common of scenarios. Ye Yin Zhu was undoubtedly this kind of person.

Ye Yin Zhu's zither playing was inferior to no one, so 《Music Foundation Theory》 had fundamentally no meaning to him. This 「General Principle」 line, however, caused a violent boom to resonate throughout his mind. An extraordinary idea instantly threaded its way into the depths of his mind.

Different frequency vibrations, different frequency vibrations. Yes! This is the origin of music. Since it's like this, then... As he thought of this, he suddenly crawled up from the floor. Gu-lu. His eyes brimmed with an excited and joyful light. Waving his left hand, Thundering Sprint Zither manifested above his knees. He closed his eyes and plucked the first string.

Weng——

A deep zither cry reverberated throughout the Royal Library, the string rapidly vibrating as the humming cry surged through the zither body, forming a beautiful note.

Ye Yin Zhu didn't continue, merely listening carefully as he sensed the string's tremble gradually lessen. He spoke to himself, "Any musical instrument has a different way of causing the air to vibrate along with it in order to produce different sounds. The more intense a vibration is, the louder the sound. My sound blades don't exactly make my dou qi and strings maintain the same vibration frequency after it's released. If I can maintain that relatively high vibration frequency even after the sound blade is released, then the rate at which it weakens slows. The attack range would then naturally increase substantially alongside its cutting power."

After he said this, his eyes flew open, revealing the windows to his soul. He hugged the Thundering Spring Zither to his chest and ran outside as fast as he could. The library clearly wasn't a place to practice his sound blades. He currently needed a significantly larger area to practice what he had just thought up.

Because it was the afternoon, there were many people out on the streets of Milan City. By the time Ye Yin Zhu left the city, an hour had already passed. He

relied on his dou qi to help him find an area devoid of people as fast as possible. After all, Milan City was too big.

The sky was dark, thick clouds completely covering the sun. Yet, this hazy sky couldn't affect Ye Yin Zhu's currently fantastic mood. He'd even completely tossed the matter with Silver Dragon City to the back of his mind. He didn't realize, however, that a silver figure was following not too far behind him.